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ABSTRACT

An international team reviewed the system of vocational education and training (VET) in Poland and analyzed possible alternatives for the future. Some of the main conclusions and recommendations were as follows: (1) the most crucial issue is to change the very "logic" according to which the Polish VET system has been functioning; (2) reforms cannot be implemented overnight; (3) changes in vocational education are intricately interrelated with changes in the employment system; (4) modernization requires experimentation and is a learning process itself; (5) such a learning process will not occur spontaneously and needs to be facilitated by proper interventions and guidance; (6) the biggest challenge for the VET system is to develop among youth and adults an awareness about their new societal and occupational roles and to provide them with the skills to become responsible for their own lives; (7) the modernization of the Polish VET system is a process and not the result of a single policy act; (8) VET can play a very active role in social and economic development by making people capable of taking employment initiatives and by creating demand for qualifications that previously were not available; (9) no ideal system can be designed at this point, but a "bottom-up" structure should be considered; (10) centralized experiments in reform should be tried; (11) regional training centers should be established; (12) a mixture of financial sources for financing the VET system should be sought; (13) the role of teachers should be considered; and (14) regional networks and a national network should be developed. (Appendixes include the following: a summary of the outcome of the discussions with Polish Ministries and foreign donor representatives and proposals for further action; biographies of the report authors; 86 references; and a review of the Polish VET system.) (KC)

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CEDEFOP Document

Training in transition: Comparative analysis and proposals for the modernization of vocational education and training in Poland

European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training

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Training in transition:
Comparative analysis and proposals for the modernization of vocational education and training in Poland
Peter Grootings (ed.), Wladyslaw Adamski, Martin Baethge, Oliver Bertrand, Adam Józefowicz

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Foreword

This report reviews one of the problems of Polish reforms, the solution of which should be the result of long term activity programs based on an overall analysis of the present situation and on an analysis of possible alternatives for the future. The system of vocational education and training should become one of the tools for economic development in our country. Before this can occur the system will require reconstruction though. The experience of other countries in this respect may be significant. However, the wholesale transfer of western models to Polish conditions is not feasible.

A "Polish" system of vocational education and training must be devised. It should of course consider traditions, material resources and staff which in the nearest future will be available but also the experiences of other countries, especially concerning the problems that may occur to education systems being out of step with the needs of economic development. I think, that it is most important - as is emphasized by the authors of this report - to tackle the principle question, whether Poland in order to develop its educational system is to repeat the traditional route through which the western countries had to go, or whether it should look for such a modernization which would allow it to " skip " certain stages.

It is not the purpose of this report to indicate the method of reforming the vocational education and training system in Poland. This should be resolved by decision making bodies in the country. Such a decision cannot be made, however, without an analysis of economic possibilities. It should not be made separately without considering economic reform plans and the educational system as a whole. However, I do hope that this report will be a significant source of information and inspiration for those who shall make such decisions.

I would like also to emphasize that this report is in my opinion an example of a model cooperation between foreign and Polish experts. Very frequently we are faced with criticism of reports being presented by foreign experts discussing the Polish reform. In many cases this criticism is justified, as these reviews are based on only a superficial knowledge of Polish realities. In this case we are dealing with a piece of work which is the result of mutual work and discussions

by Polish and foreign experts. It clearly utilizes the knowledge and experience of both parties. And finally I would like to convey my acknowledgment to the authors of the report, not only for their professional input but also for their enthusiasm. Special acknowledgment is due to Peter Grootings who was the initiator of this activity and coordinator of the work which created this report.

Tadeusz Kozek
Director
Task Force for Training & Human Resources

A note for readers:

Busy readers can restrict themselves to Chapter 0, which gives a summary of the conclusions and recommendations. The main report covers Chapters 1 - 5. In the annex you can find (a) a report of the discussions on the report with Polish ministries and foreign donor representatives, (b) a note on the authors (c) the list of references and (d) a more elaborate description of the present state of Polish vocational education and training written by a group of researchers from Warsaw university.

0. Summary of the main conclusions and recommendations

1. **Educational change as a learning process.**

The report of which the conclusions and recommendations will be summarized in this note has been prepared as a contribution to bringing Polish society closer to an integrated Europe. It has been written by a mixed group of Polish and international authors. The integration of Europe is not only a matter of politics and economics; it has profound social implications, indeed it will only be successful if social cohesion can be achieved. Thus, there is a growing conviction that Europe must, for economic and social reasons alike, invest heavily in its human resources if it is to be in a position to confront and master the challenges of the coming decades.

2. **All EC countries have already recognized the need for**

(a) increasing the level of qualifications of new entrants to the labour market,
(b) updating and upgrading the qualifications of the existing workforce through continuing education and training, and
(c) providing education and training of a kind which will lead to increased rates of participation in the labour force among disadvantaged, or hitherto underrepresented groups.

3. The importance of human assets is also recognized in Poland. If the comparative analysis presented in the main report is correct, modernization of the Polish Vocational Education and Training (VET) system becomes vital. We have argued in the report that such modernization cannot only refer to changes in the structure of the educational system, or to changes in the contents of the curricula. Indeed, **it has been stressed that the most crucial issue is to change the very "logic" according to which the Polish VET system has been - and to a certain extent still is - functioning.** This concerns especially the existing relations between the VET system and the employment system, the institutions that have been created in the past to organize the "communication" between these two systems and which still guide expectations and behaviour of many people.

4. It should also be realized, however, that **educational reforms cannot be implemented overnight**. Experiences, made in the past in Poland and elsewhere, provide ample evidence that new educational structures cannot be simply imposed by legal or administrative acts. Such changes take time, need

proper and careful preparation, some political stability, sufficient resources for their implementation, and - above all - require from the start the participation and involvement of all actors concerned. **Moreover, changes in vocational education and training are intricately interrelated with changes in the employment system.** A Vocational Education and Training system without the involvement of employers and unions will not survive. (One has to be realistic though and admit that firms and trade unions in Poland momentarily do not give high priority to educational matters.)

5. Modernization of the Polish VET system is to take place while simultaneously the employment system is undergoing fundamental changes and clear reference points are not yet available. Under such conditions modernization of the educational system cannot follow lines of action that are fully clear from the beginning. **Modernization would need a certain degree of experimentation and therefore has to be considered itself as a profound learning process for all actors involved.**

6. Nobody will, at this point of time, be able to present a detailed blueprint of how the Polish VET system will have to look like, nor to give detailed and precise instructions as to how to achieve this. **It is possible, however, on the basis of experiences made elsewhere in Europe, to indicate the core issues that have to be addressed for Polish VET to be able to cope with its future tasks.** This may be disappointing for those policy makers who expect definite proposals that will lead to predictable success immediately. We should be frank and open, however, and underline that, apart from a number of recommendations concerning changes in the VET system which have been put forward already for a long time by many experts - inside and outside Poland, and which have been formulated repeatedly in various policy documents -, immediate solutions for the more basic problems are not readily available. A change of the "logic" of the system can only be realized gradually by those who are involved in vocational education and training themselves, especially at the local level. **Like any learning process, however, this particular process will not develop spontaneously and needs to be facilitated and intensified by proper interventions and guidance.** Thus, our recommendations will focus on offering a realistic, and by all means pragmatic concept as to how to direct the modernization process so that it may properly respond to urgent needs arising from the labourmarket, prepare the ground for institutional reforms needed to face the challenges of the medium term, and make good use of available resources.

Before presenting our proposals in detail, we shall first briefly summarize the main assumptions on which they are based and indicate which of the already widely discussed reform measures would find our immediate agreement.

7. **Basic assumptions for change strategies.**

The biggest challenge for vocational education is to develop among youth and adults alike, an **awareness about their new societal and occupational roles, and to provide them with the skills to become responsible for their own biography**. This implies also, that we have to **go beyond traditional reform proposals** that merely aim at changing the structures of existing institutions inside the vocational education and training system. We rather have to probe which new forms and mechanisms of communication are to be created, both within the VET system and between the school and the labourmarket, so that individual initiative and independence can be promoted.

8. **The time dimension for modernization: open architecture for the Polish VET system.**

We consider the modernization of the Polish VET system as a process-in-time and not as a single policy act. While in the case of the latter institutional reform would do, our position has almost opposite implications. It means above all, that we assume that a "final" architecture of the new VET system in Poland remains largely open for a considerable time, and that Polish VET will most probably be characterized by the "living together" of different solutions. At different moments and in different places different problems will occur, for which - realistically speaking - different resources will be available.

9. In the discussions about the future challenges to VET systems in Western countries some directions and tendencies have gradually become accepted (see in detail Chapter 3). These developments will undoubtedly become also relevant for Poland. However, how and under which conditions these tendencies are - or can be - adapted and implemented in Poland, can only be worked out during the practice of the modernization process. No definite time schedules or deadlines can be given. This does not mean, however, that vocational education has to take a passive stand and wait until things are more clear. On the contrary, one of the major lessons of the past twenty years from EC countries shows that **VET can play a very active role in social and economic development both by making people capable to take employment initiatives and by simply creating demand for qualifications that previously were not available.** VET is not only an agent that provides for (new) technical and economical skills and qualifications but it also transmits and develops individual aspirations and types of social behaviour.

10. **No ideal architecture can be designed** at this point: will the VET system be a school-based system, will it be a firm-based one, or will it have the

characteristics of a dual system? The relevant question at present is how to solve concrete problems in the best way, that is: pragmatic but using all possible experiences made elsewhere and all knowledge that is available about the future. Under the present conditions it is simply impossible, and at the same time a matter of wrong priorities, to work on a grand design of an overall modern VET system.

11. **Starting points for Modernization: guided experiments with local VET networks**

We assume that modernization of the VET system will have to start from presently available resources and with full involvement of the locally existing actors. Realistically speaking, - and apart from the absence of any comprehensive reform concept - neither the vast financial means, nor the human resources needed to develop and implement a fundamental reform, are available in Poland. On the other hand, we have the strong impression that initiatives, resources and capacities that are present at the local level (including those supported by foreign assistance) are not fully, or efficiently used. One reason for this may exactly be the desire to look for a quick overall reform.

12. It is not only because of future uncertainty and lack of basic resources that makes it unwise to set all hopes on agrand reform. It seems especially important, after a long period of central regulation and bureaucratic administration, to depart from a traditional "top-down"reform conception. Instead, **the guiding principle should be to improve and promote self-responsibility and self-initiative of local actors.** Observers have noted, however, the "learned helplessness" among local actors and their widespread waiting for guidelines and directions from "above". Even in cases where initiatives have been developed, the chance for success is frequently hampered by the lack of supporting infrastructures. It is an illusion that local initiatives for modernization can beachieved by relying only on the operation of spontaneous forces of the market. **A "bottom-up" strategy asks for well designed and planned projects within an overall framework, for the realization of which public support is needed, in terms of finances as well as in terms of professional advice and coordination.**

13. **Therefore, we propose to promote the modernization process of the VET system with a series of decentralized experiments at the local, sectorial or regional level. These experiments have to be coordinated and monitored at the national level so that they can function as buildingstones for a general modernization of the VET system. The experiments would need proper conceptional and institutional support.**

Re-valuation of education and training

14. A successful modernization of both the VET and the employment system can only be achieved when **Polish society recaptures the value given to education and training**. Concretely, this means that individual investments in education - in terms of time and money - will have to be reflected in occupational positions, and in income- and salary levels. This is true for the privately organized sector of the economy, as well as for the state organized sector of public services, including education. Obviously,this will imply a fundamental reversion of developments that have occurred over the last forty years.

15. Western countries have also made the experience that higher levels of education invoke dissatisfaction with traditional forms of work organization and contents of work: **people want to be able to make use of the qualifications and skills achieved.** Indeed, it has been argued that the widening gap between levels of education and employment has been one of the causes of social and economic crisis in Poland. This again shows that simply increasing the levels of education further is no solution for current education and employment problems.

16. Relationships between education and work have become extremely complex in modern societies and these relationships can no longer be institutionalized through strictly separated and static systems of education andemployment, as used to be the case in many Western countries; nor can their complexity be denied through an administrative system of formal one-sided dependencies, as used to be the case in Poland. **Forms of continuous mutual communication and adaptation between education and employment have become crucial.**

17. **Focal points for modernization of Polish VET**

This is not the first and also not the only report that has been written on the modernization of the Polish VET system. Some of the recommendations that have been made earlier by other experts are fully supported by us and therefore do not need further extensive coverage. Proposals for change that would meet our acceptance include the following:

- To radically decrease the quantitative importance of basic vocational schooling, and to simultaneously upgrade the quality of this type of education;
- to improve flexibility and possibilities for internal mobility of the VET system (and there are various ways to do so);
- to change the mono-industrial character of vocational schools;
- to restore and improve the participation of enterprises in the practical parts of vocational education and training;

- to broaden the training profiles and to concentrate on a smaller number of such profiles;
- to improve the education and training in foreign languages, new technologies and environmental issues;
- to develop education and training for the newly emerging service occupations in trade and commerce;
- to promote education and training in management, entrepreneurship, as well as for small businesses;
- to develop a retraining system against protracted unemployment;
- to redesign the organization and contents of adult education;
- to improve initial education and further training of teachers;
- to improve vocational and occupational guidance;
- to simplify the national structures for administration and management of the VET system, and to improve especially coordination between the Ministries of National Education and of Labour and Social Policy;
- to improve - or rather rebuild - the supporting infrastructure for curriculum development, research and evaluation.

18. All these recommendations have repeatedly been made, and they undoubtedly are necessary elements of any modernization strategy as we have tried to show in the comparison between the Polish VET system and developments in EC countries (see Chapter 4). Although these issues have been recognized in Poland for a long time, most of them have so far not been realized. The reasons for this are to be found on different levels (see Chapter 2). One main reason - apart from the lack of political will - has always been the absence of concrete conceptions and infrastructures for the implementation of changes. Under the present conditions, changes and their implementation are receiving an additional quality as they are related - contrary to the past - to a change of the very logic of the system: **a realistic change strategy becomes even more necessary.**

19. In view of this situation and against the background of the assumptions that have been spelled out before, we wish to make some recommendations for change strategies concerning (a) the contents of vocational education and training, (b) their organization, and (c) their financing.

20. In times of radical economic and technological change VET systems are confronted with the problem as to how to develop practice oriented education in the absence of clear points of reference and with uncertain future employment perspectives. Such is also the situation in Poland made somewhat more complex by the specific crisis problems of the transition period. **The only way to deal with such situations of uncertainty, is (a) to bring vocational**

education closer to the existing reality of enterprises and regional labour markets, and (b) to secure that in the training programmes and training methods sufficient attention is being given to developing skills - both technical and social - that enable people to cope with uncertainty.

21. This would mean, first of all, that instead of the traditional practical work periods (which have been largely characterized by the execution of simple work tasks), a real participation of enterprises in practical learning has to be developed. **Practical work has to be changed into practical learning.** Following the trends and experiences from western countries, the long-term aim should be **to achieve an "integrated dualism"** where vocational schools function as the site of general and technical theoretical education, and enterprises as the site of practical vocational training, and where theoretical subjects and practical exercises are well integrated.

22. One of the conditions would be to have inside the enterprise professional trainers available with sufficient pedagogical skills. Where enterprises are not, or not yet, in a position to play such a role in vocational education, or where there are not sufficient enterprises with training capacities - such as in rural areas - **Regional Training Centres** could be established to cater for - various kinds of - practical training.

23. In order not to limit the occupational mobility of students and trainees to the local or enterprise-specific labourmarket, educational programmes and curricula should be developed according to the principle of **"progressive specialization"**. This would mean that in the first phase of education, basic knowledge and skills (technical, professional and social) of a more general nature are to be transmitted at the level of broad occupational areas such as "engineering", "construction", "electrotechnics", "commerce and trade", etc. The second phase would aim at a first specialization at the level of related occupations. Only in a third phase the special skills and qualifications for a specific occupation (which should not be defined too narrowly and at a too low level) are to be developed with a major share of practical learning. The principle of "progressive specialization" is relatively independent from the overall organization of the learning process, i.e. whether this is school- or enterprise based, or whether this is structured more traditionally on an annual basis, or according to modules.

24. Such a broadly designed vocational education takes into account that vocational education cannot serve any longer for life-long employment in one single job, but has to provide the necessary foundations for both occupational

activity and continuous education and training. **Initial vocational education is no longer final education but only the first phase of a continuous life-long learning process.** Poland undoubtedly shares this concern with western countries.

25. Especially during the transition period, Poland will have a **tremendous additional need for retraining of the workforce.** The great efforts needed to develop within a short period of time a well functioning system of retraining offer good chances for the simultaneous development of both initial vocational education and further education. The market seems to react at present mainly to the needs for management training and business services; the equally high need for retraining of the unemployed and of those who are living and working in crisis regions requires the provision of public support. **Our proposal to set up Regional Training Centres would provide the opportunity to very quickly realize new forms and contents of training.** Experiences made in retraining, and with the developing regional labour market could easily enter into the programmes for initial education. As much as possible such **Regional Training Centres should therefore be multi-occupational, accessible for all vocational institutions from the region (including the schools that have no other access to practical training places) and make use of existing facilities and resources (including teaching staff).** It may even be possible to physically locate regional training centres in the premises of existing schools.

26. Besides a renewal of educational contents, **methods and forms of education and training play a crucial role in the achievement of modern vocational skills.** For trainees to learn such elementary skills as to be able to act independently, to communicate, and cooperate with others, they necessarily have to be involved actively in the educational process. This means a fundamental de parture from traditional classroom and teacher-centered forms of education. Many forms of such active types of learning have already been developed, such as work in projects, group learning, simulation games etc. However, and this should not be forgotten, such new methods of education assume **new roles for teachers and trainers. Teachers and trainers cease to be the vocational and technical experts of encyclopedic knowledge or practical skills and rather become competent organizers of experience- and learning processes.** The learning process can be further supported by the interactive use of new media. Undoubtedly this will have implications for the training and recruitment of teaching staff.

27. **Organization of VET: Local flexibility and national standards.**

Besides contents of educational programmes (practice oriented and based on progressive specialization) and methods of education (aimed at the promotion of new technical and social skills), the problem of **recognition of educational qualifications** has to be solved in a new way. The traditional approach, also applied in Poland, has tried to exert central control on the quality of education through curricula programmes and contents and has resulted in the contradictory situation where bureaucratic administration and inflexibility concerning "input" go together with a wide diversity of "output" quality levels across the country. Instead, and following recent experiences of several western countries, a **national framework for occupational standards and qualifications should be elaborated** by educational authorities in close cooperation with the social partners. Provision of education and training (including definition of curricula contents) can be flexible and locally determined but within a nationally agreed framework of qualification requirements. Examinations or tests lead to nationally - and eventually internationally - recognized qualifications. The system is to be valid for initial and further education and training and should also provide the quality standards for retraining programmes.

28. An additional advantage of a system of national standards is that its elaboration has to involve not only representatives from the educational system. **In most EC countries, industry and trade unions, representing the principal "users" of educational programmes, discuss and elaborate basic occupational profiles which then form the basis for national qualification standards. The latter can be translated - in different ways and with the assistance of educational professionals - into educational and training programmes. The role of national educational authorities is to guard that standards are consistent -nationally and internationally - and that mobility between different types and levels of education is secured.** Polish educational authorities can make use of the vast experiences already made with such forms of organization ofvocational education both at national (e.g. Denmark, Netherlands, Germany, United Kingdom) and international level in EC countries. One note of caution concerns the temptation to simply imitate one of these existing systems. Contrary to what developers of such national systems may occasionally want to convey, experience with the development of a European system of qualifications have shown that such national frameworks indeed reflect national systems of occupational qualifications which differ considerably from one to the other. A Polish system, therefore, will have to be developed in Poland, based on Polish realities. It should also be pointed out, that the development of national standards requires a huge amount of work, implying

major investments and the availability of a professional research and evaluation infrastructure. In the Polish case, however, the challenge of developing national standards may be used for restoring such research capacities.

29. **Financing of the VET system: In search of a mixture of financial sources.**

Modernization of the Vocational Education and Training system cannot be achieved free of charge. Although also in Polish public opinion, it has been recognized that educational expenses are investments in the future, the financing of the VET system and of education in general has become a major obstacle due to the dramatic situation of the state budget. The principal criteria to be used for the choice of financing mechanisms (their collection and distribution) are to be derived from the purposes of education and training. In the case of Poland, and more in particular for the phase of transition, financing mechanisms should:

- contribute to an improvement of the quality of education and training and not simply to the survival of educational institutions;
- not lead to increased selective access to education and training;
- give incentives to enterprises to become actively involved in the practical parts of vocational education and training;
- encourage individuals to invest more in their own qualifications.

30. These criteria lead us to comment on three different sources of financing: a) more efficient use of existing resources, b) introduction of a special training contribution from industry, and c) financial contributions by trainees.
Possibilities for a more efficient use of existing resources from the state budget are primarily to be found through the revitalization of presently unused training facilities of the large enterprises (buildings, equipment, materials, know-how and staff). These facilities should be evaluated according to the possibilities they would offer for their transformation into regional multifunctional training centres (for initial education, further- and re-training). In the course of privatization measures, the ownership question of training facilities could be solved separately, for example through the establishment of regional tripartite training foundations.

31. **The present mono-sectorial vocational schools should be transformed into schools with a much broader vocational profile.** This would imply fundamental changes in the overall management of vocational education at the national level. School facilities could also be used more efficiently for the provision of non-formal education and also could form the basis for regional

training centres, especially where enterprise facilities are absent. This would imply a further decentralization of management responsibilities of vocational institutions.

32. **The role and position of teachers could be reconsidered.** Since teacher's salaries form the largest part of the state educational budget, a careful analysis of the specific local educational situation, the existing human resources and available know-how could eventually lead to re allocation of staff. Retraining and further education of teachers should be integrated as much as possible with the development of regional centres mentioned above. Needless to say that such steps would have to involve delicate negotiations with representatives of the teaching staff concerning their social, economic and legal status.

33. It should be considered whether it will be possible to require from industry a **special training contribution** (such as exists in Hungary) which would primarily serve to finance enterprise based or regional training provisions. Such financial contributions exist in most western countries in different forms (related to turn-over or to wage bill) and could be replaced by direct practical training provision of firms. The existing payments to the Labour Fund could also be used for such purposes. In order to achieve optimal cost efficiency, financing mechanisms should be designed which would allow the combined use of various financial sources at the local or regional level. Systems of co-financing or conditional financing should as much as possible replace automatic subventions in order to promote involvement and responsibility at local level. Distribution of financial means should be organized at the regional level with the participation of public administration and social partners.

34. We assume, that those forms of continuous education which primarily serve individual career or income improvements are to be financed through the market.

35. **Experimenting with Modernization: Regional VET Networks and National Taskforce.**

With the aim of promoting the process of modernization of vocational education and training in Poland we propose that pilot projects be started for the development of **Regional Vocational Education Networks**. Such networks would seek (a) the establishment of effective communication mechanisms between all actors and institutions at the local level, concerning training needs and provisions, and (b) to create the facilities to realize these in a flexible way, making the

most efficient use of existing facilities and resources, on a qualitatively recognized level.

36. A "network" should be understood as a cooperative effort of firms, schools, training institutions, labour offices, chambers of commerce, and trade unions with the common aim to improve, at the local or regional level, the relationships between education and employment. Such networks should be organized around the establishment of **Regional Training Centres**, be initially funded from public sources and monitored and evaluated by research. They should be allowed considerable autonomy in the elaboration of models for new contents and methods of vocational education best adapted to prevailing local conditions and facilities.

37. Priority areas for the first series of such networks are to be found in (a) rural areas, with the view to respond to the crisis in agriculture and the lack of service infrastructures in such areas, (b) the mono-cultural traditional industrial areas, with the view to accommodating young and adult unemployed and offering them retraining according to developing needs of the local labour market, and (c) to cater for so far non-existing service sector occupations for which the educational schoolsystem has not yet found proper educational programmes.

38. **The Training Centres** which are to be developed as one of the immediate activities of these networks should provide facilities for retraining and further education but also practical learning opportunities to students from vocational schools, pending the time that enterprises can play a substantial role in vocational education. The centres can become experimentation bases for substantive modernization of vocational education, as well as for establishing a new "logic" in the communication between educational institutions and the labour market.

39. One has to keep in mind, however, that all forms of vocational training and continuous education are connected with employment perspectives. Experience has learned that training is a necessary condition, but as such cannot solve any unemployment problem. Moreover, people are only interested and motivated to enter training if they see realistic chances to improve their employment situation. The extremely low numbers of unemployed that presently are involved in retraining measures in Poland are to be partially explained by the absences of employment perspectives. **Therefore, the combination of training and employment is crucial.** While we are not able, in this context, to discuss this matter in detail, it is possible to indicate possible options for policy making.

40. **We would insist that the time necessary to implement the simultaneous process of privatization and restructuring of Polish industry be used to stabilize existing skill potentials and preferably even to develop new potentials for which there will be an increasing demand on the labourmarket.** Thus, in combination with the Regional Training Centres proposed before, there will be a need for the development of institutions which go beyond offering training facilities, and which, for a transition period, would combine training and employment.

41. Taking as an example the Training and Employment Companies in Germany ("Qualifizierungs- und Beschäftigungsgesellschaften"), such Centres could be involved in infrastructural work to be financed by local authorities, but also in product and enterprise development in private firms, or in firms that are to be privatized. The aim of such Centres would always have to be the promotion of small and medium sized enterprises through a combination of training- and employment measures of a temporary nature. For this to be achieved, it will be necessary that the Centres **not only offer technical qualifications, but also administrative, commercial and managerial ones.**

42. One of the major conditions for the successful realization of innovative policy measures is the **availability of adequate implementation capacities**. In view of the absence of any experience at the local level with the implementation of actions proposed by us, a specialized and professional **Development Team** should be established for the mobilization and coaching of local actors in the pilotprojects. Each project should be coordinated on a full-time base by a member of the Development Team. Local actors should be put in the position, also financially, to actively engage in the development of VET networks. There should be enough funds for process and output evaluation in order to make proper dissemination of experiences possible.

43. **Funds and technical assistance** for the establishment of VET networks, including resourcing of the training centres, could come from the various international and bi-lateral assistance programmes, preferably on the basis of a co-financing system which combines local, national and international funds. This could also lead to a better and more strategic use of foreign resources. There should be close cooperation between the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy in the implementation of their respective assistance programmes for adult and youth training. Experience learns that such cooperation is easier to be developed at the local level in the solution of practical problems, than at the central level between administrations.

44. **National Task Force for the Modernization of the Polish VET system: Mobilization and evaluation.**

We know that a number of initiatives along the lines that we propose have already been taken (supported by EC Phare and by bilateral programmes). However, they remain isolated and lack sufficient back-up at the central level. Moreover, there is as yet no capacity to effectively use the experiences that are being made for developing a national strategy for the modernization of vocational education. At the same time, at the national level attempts to formulate new vocational education policies remain limited to institutional aspects and are being blocked by the lack of resources. Policy makers should look for alternatives to the traditional "top-down" approach for educational change. **A new combination of local initiatives and experimentation, on the one hand, coupled with mobilization, monitoring and dissemination at the central level, on the other, could bemore realistic and effective.**

45. We have spelled out our ideas for promoting initiatives at the local level. To avoid that such local experiences remain isolated and become unused for the modernization of the system at large, we suggest the establishment, for a limited period of time, of a **National Task Force for Vocational Education and Training** which should have as its principal **aims (a) to instigate a national debate on the future of vocational education and training, (b) to elaborate the broad orientations for the VET system, in terms of its structure, management, provision, contents, financing, and monitoring (This would also include the elaboration of a National System of Qualification Standards), and (c) to work out a strategy for the implementation of modernization measures based on accumulated local experiences.**

46. The National Task Force should be established by the Government, and be composed of representatives of all social partners, chaired by a person of high social prestige, but work independently of the Government or any of the specialized ministries. It should avail of a **daily professional secretariat**, and be able to consult external experts, both from Poland and from abroad. The National Task Force would have to meet regularly with a Commission of representatives of relevant ministries in order to discuss the progress of its work.

47. The secretarial function could be organized by the existing Task Force Training and Human Resources which at present coordinates foreign assistance in the field of education and training. The budget for the National Task Force could be established from a combination of state funds, EC PHARE funds, and funds managed by the Polish Cooperation Fund.

48. **Additional activities** can be developed by the secretariat which do not involve huge sums of money but which would assist the National Task Force in its work and would simultaneously create the necessary conditions for the development of a national awareness of the important issues as well as a policy oriented support structure:

- Collection and dissemination of information and documentation about European systems of vocational education and training and their recent developments, in close cooperation with existing national and EC institutions in this field.

- This should be accompanied by the stimulation of study visits, international contacts and meetings between different actors from VET systems, especially practitioners, researchers and policy makers. More inparticular, within the framework of the Association Agreement with the European Community, Polish participation in EC programmes for vocational education should be promoted. However, it should be secured that the experiences and results of such exchanges be continuously evaluated on their use for the Polish VET system and are at the disposal of the National Task Force.

- To that end, it is also necessary to reconstruct a professional and multidisciplinary Research and Development structure which can assist in the development and implementation of conceptions, contents and structures, based on experiences (methodological and substantial) achieved at the local level, in Poland but also elsewhere. Such a task could eventually initially by fulfilled by the secretariat, which could then gradually be further developed to continue to operate as an independent research unit after the National Task Force has terminated its activities. The secretariat would have to be able to mobilize all existing research capacities in Poland. The Government should consider the possibility of reserving research funds for the financing of research needed by the National Task Force.

1. Modernization of the Polish VET system. Comparative analysis for policy development

1.1. Introduction

The breakdown of the system of state socialism has opened before the people of Poland an opportunity to shape freely their social, economic and political institutions. This regained freedom of choice has found its immediate expression in the officially proclaimed goal to introduce a market economy and to establish a political system based on parliamentary democracy. In order to achieve these goals it was initially widely believed that it would suffice to replace the existing institutional and legal system by laws and institutions more adequate for the new situation. The essence of such a policy has been generally defined as a "return to normality". It was also supposed that this return to normality could be achieved in a relatively short time, relying mostly on the people's spontaneous contributions to the unrestricted economic and political opportunities offered to them.

However, at present, after almost three years of experimentation, it appears that such initial expectations have been somewhat unrealistic. Instead of being "an easy way home", the transition period now is generally perceived as a rather long-distance escapade with the concrete implementation routes yet to be explored and the desired final outcomes still to be agreed upon by the participating partners.

It appears rather difficult to replace existing institutions and develop alternatives even when largely restricted to political, economic, and financial ones, especially in a period of financial crisis. The formation of market and parliamentary rules do not automatically generate better life chances and commitment of the people. The lack of political stability, itself one of the results of the transition problems, has caused discontinuity in policy making at all levels. The challenge for the new leaders of Poland is to transform vital elements of society at the same time. This of course is not possible. Due to the absence of historical comparable situations, the overall transition will have to be largely the result of trial-and-error, mediated by the political programs of political parties subsequently in power. However, this does not mean that there are no experiences at all that could be made use of. In fact, in the specific areas on which reform policies have concentrated so far, foreign experiences have already frequently been used. Some practical experiences with the opening up of local economies to practices and requirements prevailing on the world market have been accumulated on both sides. This experience in itself lends some valuable lessons as to the course of further actions and the need to improve the perception of mutual concerns and patterns of cooperation.

The aim of this report is threefold. First, it supports a long-standing case for a radical reform of the Polish Vocational Education and Training system (VET) and to obliterate major drawbacks that have been recognized already for a long time. Secondly, it argues that such a reform, being a necessary condition for the success of the ongoing transformation, has to be firmly based on a comprehensive understanding of the process of systemic and structural change. And thirdly, the report tries to convey that policy-making has to be grounded in careful international comparative analysis and cannot be rooted only in the internal Polish educational reform debates that have been held during the past twenty years. However, we also do stress that there is no single foreign model to be simply copied or applied. The new system of vocational education and training in Poland will remain a Polish model. The use of foreign experiences and foreign assistance should be based on a clear conception developed by Polish decision makers. International comparative analysis and cooperation can be considered as tools for a cost-effective modernization of the VET system, they cannot replace policy making itself. The analysis presented in this report, as well as the policy measures proposed therefore have to be considered as "food for thought" offered to the wider public of actors who are involved in the modernization of the Polish VET system, inside and outside the country.

1.2. The need for modernization of the Polish VET system

East European governmental reform policies, the Polish ones included, have initially given remarkably little attention to the social conditions and implications of the programs for economic and political reform that are embarked upon. In Poland, the stress has been put on privatization of the economy; the introduction of the market as the main price regulating mechanism; and the creation of the financial infrastructure and monetary environment necessary for this. Concern for the need to develop a coherent strategy for social development has grown however. Such considerations have met with little room for manoeuvre under the severe limitations set by the financial crisis of the state budget.

When we look at the "human resource" side of the reforms, we can notice a great deal of attention being given to education and training of entrepreneurs and managers, some attention to supporting the increasing numbers of the unemployed, and - within the educational system - to language teaching and university students. But that is almost all! It seems that with the so dearly wished dissolution of the state socialist system not only the Party but also the working class has ceased to exist. The consequences of these policies have already led to growing political dissatisfaction among the population. The lack of serious attention to the social aspects of the transition may also soon prove to be socially and economically disastrous and as such may well endanger the whole project of

reform. Not everybody can or wants to become a private entrepreneur. Managers, even if trained at the best business schools in the world, are not able to produce or to deliver services to the market without the skills and professional capabilities of those whom they will have to manage. Firms not only look at the availability of a banking and communication system when considering investing in the country, they also want to be sure that there is a qualified work force able and willing to produce according to accepted standards.

A major part of the population of Poland, like in many of the other Central and East European countries, has gone - and still goes - through the VET system. Social and educational policies of the previous system have consciously concentrated on developing and preserving a social structure build around the working class. People have not only acquired specific skills and qualifications but have also developed expectations and aspirations that they finally wish to see fulfilled. However, as the Polish author Andrzej Szczypiorski has rightly noted, such aspirations and expectations have been the result of three generations living and working under very specific pedagogical conditions, and have created the "illusion of equality" and the "reality of material security", be it at a very modest level.

While the growing dissatisfaction with the previous system basically stemmed from the fact that it was not able to realize these values any longer, the new system and the new policies accompanying it, are openly questioning their very validity. People are now being confronted with "the promise of a higher living standard" and the "reality of growing inequality and material insecurity". Obviously, this is not merely a problem of laws and institutions. Here we have the most complicated, but at the same time the most crucial, educational problem to be solved during the transition period.

As will be argued in the following chapters, this problem also poses itself with respect to the modernization of the VET system. The issues here are not confined, as is usually assumed, to the teaching of new skills for new types of occupations or new types of technology but involve also general attitudinal and behavioral skills.

Modernization of the VET system is necessary simply given the fact that the present VET system in Poland has been organized, in structure, organization and contents, to serve the requirements of a monopolistic and centrally-led economy which (a) has stressed industrial mass production on the basis of administrative planning figures, and (b) has produced - for ideological reasons and as a result of the technological obsolescence of its industry - a quantitative dominance of the working class in the social structure. Such a system cannot be

automatically useful for an economy which is (a) to be oriented at the production of goods and services for an international competitive market, and (b) would need a much more differentiated social structure, including a strong middle-class to achieve this.

Vocational education and training, however, is only one part of the broader educational system and its modernization, of course, has to be part of an overall modernization of education in Poland. Details of an educational reform should be based on a profound and careful analysis of the actual state of the system and, in order to be realistic, of the human resources and financial means that are available. Such an analysis has yet to be undertaken with respect to the present transition period. The evaluations of the Polish educational system that have been published after 1989 do not always address the core issues basically because they have been undertaken by actors from **inside** the system. These reports on the Polish VET system have been prepared by teachers and school directors and tend to focus almost exclusively on the "internal" structures of vocational education and training. They show however that many of the problems that exist today have been recognized already during the early 1970s. While their negative effects had been obvious for the old system, they are becoming even more serious for the present phase of transition and reform. Thus, there is already a considerable awareness that something is wrong with vocational education and training in Poland (and apparently also a readiness to tackle problems).

However, the available analyses, not surprisingly, show another typical continuity: they are generally not able to break through the conceptual logic of the previous system of vocational education. As a consequence, though, the diagnosis remains superficial and the reform proposals do not cover the most crucial aspects. This is especially true for the lack of attention being given so far to the fundamentally changed function of VET with respect to the labor market and the employment system. Old management structures and communication mechanisms do not work anymore but continue to exist. We shall go with more details into this matter in Chapters 3 and 4.

1.3. The use of international experiences for policy development

Comparative analysis, as understood by the authors of this report, differs considerably from the way international experiences are usually used. We do not have an abstract model for vocational education from which we can deduce universally valid policy prescriptions. What we can offer, instead, is a rich body of knowledge and systematic experience about the structures and functioning of various vocational education systems in different countries, as well as a -

gradually widely accepted - view on the future challenges that these countries are facing and for which their vocational education systems will have to find the proper responses.

This knowledge about the functioning of national systems as well as the views on the future challenges are themselves the outcome of comparative research undertaken during the past 15 years in western market economies. They form the basis for an ongoing debate between researchers and policy makers about the nature of policy measures to be taken, at the national and the international level. Obviously, such measures will differ according to the specific national situation in each country. In this sense, **comparative analysis is a learning exercise** which may help

a) through the confrontation with other experiences to better understand the internal functioning of each national system, and

b) to assess the constraints and possibilities for the implementation of policies - whether or not already tried in other countries - in answer to existing challenges.

This way of doing international comparative analysis therefore does not produce detailed prescriptions for action. Policies and actions have to be continuously designed and redesigned by all actors involved in vocational education while using the results of comparative analysis. Such an approach, however, does assume the availability of capacities and infrastructure

a) to undertake comparative analysis

b) to develop a discussion in society among the principal actors for the translation of such experiences into operational policy measures, and

c) to effectively implement and monitor such measures. We have the strong impression that such capacity and infrastructure does not exist at present in Poland.

While arguing for the need to modernize vocational education and training in Poland we shall proceed along the lines of comparative analysis sketched above. This is not the place to discuss in detail the theoretical and methodological implications of comparative policy oriented analysis. However, a brief outline of the complexity of the matter is needed, if only to substantiate our argument that the present report should be considered as "an input to the discussion".

The analysis that we want to undertake is made complex by the fact that we are dealing with a country in the phase of transition from one socio-economic system towards another. The comparative research referred to above, however, has all been undertaken between countries belonging to one and the same socio-economic system. The "logic" of the centrally-planned system has asked for, and has effectively produced over time, a different set of institutions, attitudes and behavioral patterns than required by a system guided by the "logic" of the market, independently of the fact how successful either of these logics have been functioning. If these different logics or principles are not properly understood there can be no understanding of the role that individual institutions are playing, including those that are concerned with vocational education: the role that ministries, vocational schools, firms, trade unions and local educational authorities used to play is quite different from what is asked from them today and tomorrow. Equally, the attitudes and behaviors of decision-makers, school directors, teachers, administrators, managers, parents and students are to be different.

International comparative analysis may help in understanding these differences which then could form the basis for developing educational reform measures and change strategies. To give an example: with all appreciation for the acute material needs of many vocational schools that have resulted from earlier underinvestments - what sense does it make to provide the latest technical equipment if the school has not managed to redefine its position towards its environment of the local labor market?

However, it will not be enough to understand the logic of the system. We also have to understand the specific ways in which Poland has shaped its educational institutions in response to the requirements posed by the centrally-planned system. Here, obviously, one will find a certain degree of continuity with the pre-war situation, and therefore also with patterns and traditions developed elsewhere in Europe. This would allow to make comparisons with other countries and also poses a warning against too radical changes.

A second complicated factor is formed by the fact that western countries and the market-oriented logic to which they have to respond, are not static systems themselves. As a matter of fact, as will be argued in more detail in Chapter 3, western economies are on the brink of having to radically change their existing vocational education infrastructures in response to a new set of challenges. Should Poland concentrate on educational architectures as they do exist at present in market oriented societies, or should it rather orient itself at the fundamental changes taking place inside these existing architectures? Will Poland, at this stage of the transition be able to make "a leap forward", or will it

first have to go through more traditional forms of vocational education? If so, how to avoid that it will be condemned to "lag behind" its western neighbors for ever? International comparative analysis may help to elucidate such questions. Again, the search for concrete actions and policies has to be undertaken by the actors themselves. They cannot do, however, without the information and perspectives provided by this type of research and analysis.

Such is the challenge that the authors of this report have set themselves. It will be clear, that owe have not been able to find decisive answers to all these problems. One of the major problems that we have faced in the course of our work is the lack, and almost absence, of analyses of vocational education problems in Poland. We have been even more struck by the fact that, in a country where vocational education - at least quantitatively - plays such an important role for such a large part of the population, these issues have received almost no attention in the public discussions on modernization and restructuring of the economy. As mentioned earlier, the change process during the transition period will take a long time and will necessarily be based on trial-and-error. A proper analysis of the nature of the problems and the options that are available for their solutions can only help to minimize the risk of failure.

1.4. Working procedure and structure of the report

This report is the result of a rather unique cooperation between Polish and foreign experts. The international composition of the team has made it possible to combine knowledge and experiences from different countries and from different areas of research. All members have vast international experience and this has made it possible to avoid what is usually happening in situations where evaluations of national systems are undertaken: either they remain very "national" with at best some historical comparisons when the work is done by a team of national researchers. Or, they fail to really understand crucial aspects of the system when work is done by "foreign" teams of experts. Although our mixed group has only met four times in official meetings, previous experience, correspondence and additional informal meetings have contributed to a sufficient mutual understanding to allow us to present this report as a joint piece of work. Informal discussions with Polish colleagues on the arguments and main conclusions of our analysis have prevented us from oversimplifying matters. Detailed information concerning the professional qualifications of the group members are presented in the annex.

The mixed group has been assisted in its work by a small team of Polish researchers from Warsaw University. This team has undertaken necessary background research: they have done most of the data collection and interview-

ing with Polish key persons. The team has also acted as a constant discussion partner in the various stages of the work. All information collected has been summarized in an up-to-date description of the state of Polish vocational education and training. This description is added in an annex to the main report. Parts of the description have been used in Chapter 4.

In order to give the reader some idea about the structure of the report: **Chapter 2** looks at the past and the future of Polish vocational education in terms of constraints and challenges offered by developments in Polish society. It reviews shortly the post-war development of the Polish educational system and the various - largely - unsuccessful reform attempts of the past. It then analyses three environmental aspects of future vocational education: labor market developments, status of education in society and demographic trends.

In **Chapter 3**, we present a summary of major challenges that West European societies are facing now and in the immediate future, assuming that these challenges are going to be relevant for Poland as well. We start with a note of caution stressing that there are no models that simply can be copied. We do argue, however, that there is increased consensus about the general nature of the challenges that are ahead of us and about the global character of responses that are asked for: change, uncertainty and instability will be the characteristics of future employment systems. Occupational structures, skills and qualifications will fundamentally change: there will be a greater need for higher levels of basic general education, social skills and continuous education. Vocational education and training systems will have to be flexible and responsive in their structures and organization in order to be able to properly respond to these developments. At the same time the quality of human resources will be more and more decisive for the social and economic prosperity of European societies: modern employment systems can only develop if modernized vocational education systems provide the proper qualifications to the labor market.

The note of caution is repeated at the end of the chapter: while the challenges are common and a general consensus concerning the character of responses exists, countries will differ to the extent that they will be able to develop policies and institutions. Again: their is no "one-best-way", and each country will have to develop its own course based on its own resources and traditions.

Chapter 4 gives a systematic "confrontation" between recent developments and experiences in Western Europe, on the one hand, and basic characteristics of Polish vocational education, on the other. Subsequently analysis concentrates on:

a) Structure and Location of Vocational Education and Training

b) Contents and Curricula

c) Monitoring and Evaluation

d) Resources

e) Adult and Continuing Education.

In an overall conclusion it is being argued that priority areas for reform are not so much, and not primarily, to be sought in those areas that are typically of concern to educational practitioners, such as curricula, equipment and materials. More important for immediate action, and unfortunately until now largely neglected, are the establishment of new mechanisms for communication with the labor market that would ensure a long-time and continuous modernization of methods and contents of vocational education and training in Poland. Poland risks to become obsessed with aspects of modernization that already almost belong to the past in many western countries, and consequently not to be properly prepared for the future challenges with which many western countries are now increasingly concerned.

Chapter 5, finally, addresses the delicate issue of how to change many things at the same time, in a situation where the future is largely uncertain, without detailed models that can be copied and with a serious lack of resources inside the country. We argue basically that educational change under Polish conditions is to be seen as a profound learning process. As with every learning process, however, this one cannot be completely left to the spontaneous working of whatever forces. It needs some planned strategy, some clarification of goals, some intervention measures, some back-up and support, and some kind of evaluation.

Our proposal for setting in motion an organized learning process at different levels seeks to combine our understanding of the Polish problems with our knowledge about trends and developments in Western European countries. We suggest to develop, on an experimental basis and with foreign assistance, a certain number of Local Training Networks, comprised of all institutions involved in vocational education and training in a certain region. The principal aim of these networks is to set in place effective communication mechanisms. Such Local Training Networks could be developed through the establishment of joint Local Training Centers being the sites for experimental forms and contents of practice

oriented vocational education and training. The various Local Training Networks are to be coordinated and monitored by a - temporarily set up - National Task Force for Vocational Education and Training. The Task Force would also have to instigate a national discussion on the future of vocational education in Poland, making use of the experiences made by the Local Networks in the country as well as those made elsewhere.

The different aspects of this proposal for a change strategy are elaborated in more detail in the light of three focal points:

a) Future vocational education will be based on coping with uncertainty.

b) This will ask for an organizational structure that is able to combine local flexibility in deciding on contents and provision with a national framework of qualification standards (output control instead of input control).

c) Such a system most probably can only be financed with a mixture of financial resources.

2. Constraints and Challenges. Assessing the environment of the Vocational education and training system in Poland

2.1. Introduction

One of the major obstacles in the present transition period is the desolate economic and financial situation of the country. Polish society has been hit by economic crises since the past fifteen years. This has resulted first from the procrasted stage of the collapse of the state-planned socialist system, and then was intensified by the recession induced by the shock therapy which was adopted to initiate the transition to a market economy. The drop in GNP in 1992 is expected to be in the range of 10%, and most economic experts do not see this trend to be reverted before the middle of the 1990s. The reasons for this development are well-known and do not need to be repeated here. So are the main implications for the population. Thus, the great satisfaction of the gains achieved in the sphere of civil rights and political independence is being eroded by a sense of growing economic insecurity among the population. This global economic and political environment naturally influences the educational sector and the Vocational Education and Training System (VET) more in particular.

The present situation is characterized by a growing concern for necessary reforms of the educational system, on the one hand - but almost exclusively confined to educational actors - and a dramatic lack of financial resources to even keep the existing system in tact - induced by repetitive budget cuts -, on the other. These two phenomena indicate a low priority being given in practice to education and training within the overall reform policies followed so far. Here, it seems, one can observe a certain continuity over the past 20 years.

However, it is the conviction of the authors of this report, based on experiences from a wide number of western countries, that

a) education and training have an extremely important role to play under the present conditions of transition in Poland, and that
b) while budget cuts in education are worrisome, (at least some of) the necessary reforms and changes in the educational system are not completely dependent on more funds from the state budget. **The main problem with respect to education and training is not the lack of funds but the absence of well developed conceptions with respect to the organization and management of education and training under the new economic conditions.**

Such conceptions would have to be based on an analysis of the nature of the problems and challenges that Poland is facing, as well as on a careful analysis of past and most recent developments and experiences in the country. The latter create obvious constraints for possible action; however, they may also provide valuable assets on which to build. Finally, conceptions for educational and training policies may be developed on the basis of lessons to be learned from other countries who have been faced, or are being faced with similar problems. For many reasons, it will no longer be possible to only look inside Poland, neither for the analysis of the problems, nor for the search for solutions.

In this chapter we shall analyze the most important constraints and challenges that Poland is facing with respect to the modernization of its system of Vocational Education and Training. We shall concentrate on the wider environment of the educational system. An analysis of the internal problems of vocational education and training will be undertaken in Chapter 4. Besides the general economic and financial situation of the country, relevant constraints and challenges are located in (a) the inherited structure of the educational system and the failures of past educational reforms, (b) the structure of, and recent developments on the labor market, (c) the investment in education and the educational aspirations of the Polish people, (d) the demographic development of the population structure. Information about the expected manpower supply may give some indications about the time perspectives to take into account.

2.2. The inherited structure of the educational systemand the failures of past educational reforms

In the early 1970s the educational system that had been introduced some twenty years earlier, became for the first time subject of critical evaluation by a team of experts nominated by the Government. This team, headed by Prof. Jan Szczepanski, came among others to the following recommendations:

- Primary school should start at the age of six, and a system of pre-schooling should be developed covering all children, also those living in the rural areas.

- The then existing early separation of vocational and general education should be abolished by extending elementary cum secondary general education to 11 years of schooling.

- Vocational education should be offered through three streams:

  a) On-the-job training for youth unable to successfully complete compulsory general education during 11 years;

b) Short-term school-based training of skilled workers for youth who successfully finished compulsory education;
c) School-based training of technicians within the subsystem of higher vocational schools (former post-matriculate lyceums).

- Professional education at the university level should rapidly expand and entail a 4-5 years cycle of graduate studies plus 1,5-2 years for post graduate studies. (Report on the State of Education in Poland 1973).

These recommendations, although largely accepted in academic circles and by most of the teachers, underwent subsequently several concessions on the way to their practical implementation even before the decisive blow by the economic recession of the mid-70s. Data presented in Table 1 give ample evidence of the fate of the reform intentions, indicating its total failure.

Table 1.
Enrollment in the Polish educational system. Past programs and realities.

Enrollment in % of the relevant age groups

Type of schooling		Planned* for the years 1975	1985	2000	Achieved 1990
Pre-school	(4-6)	40	60	90	60
Primary (8 grades)	(7-15)	91	95	95	98
Special schools for disabled	(8-18)	-	5	5	2
Basic Vocational Secondary	(16-18)	46	33	8	49
- Vocational	(16-20)	12	24	20	28
- General	(16-19)	17	60	67	19
Post-Secondary	(20-21)	4	27	30	10
Tertiary	(20-24)	7	23	38	15

Source:
1) Raport o stanie oswiaty w PRL, Table 6.8, pp 429-432, PWN, Warszawa 1973
2) CSO Statistical Yearbooks
*) Planned figures refer to variant I-B, which did not envisage changes in the school system.

One reason for this apparent failure has been the lack of financial resources made available for the reform of the system. Spending on school education (higher education excluded) has decreased from 3,93% of GNP in 1970, to 3,15% in 1975, and 3,41% in 1980. Spending on educational investments has decreased even more sharply. If we look at the share of educational investments of the total sum of money spent by the national economy on investments, the former went down from 4,5% in 1960, to 2,9% in 1970 and 1,6% in 1980. Under such conditions, it has obviously not been possible to meet the aims set for the educational reform or even to modernize the existing educational infrastructure.

However, these financial data do no tell us why the state authorities have failed or refused to secure adequate resources for the educational system. Reference to the economic and fiscal crisis might be appropriate for the 1980s but certainly not for the 1970s. There must be other factors at stake of a more political nature and for a possible explanation of these we have to understand the role that education has played in the development of Polish society after the second world war.

The tasks and functions of the educational system during the first post-war period were determined by urgent economic and political needs. The new political leaders of the time were not only forced to develop as fast as possible the class of intelligentsia which had been dramatically decimated both as a result of war time losses and of political emigration, but also to integrate this class within the goals of the imposed socialist system. The working class and the peasantry became the principal base for the recruitment of the new intelligentsia. To realize such educational policy, reforms within the educational system (development of a system of privileges and facilities to enhance the access of youth from worker and peasant origin to secondary and higher education; development of a system of extra-mural adult education, and financial assistance to these categories of students) were undertaken. Data from public statistics and from scientific empirical studies indicate that the post-war diffusion of education has been largely successful and has indeed substantially contributed to the envisaged changes in social structure of Polish society. Among the total number of graduates of higher schools in the period between 1945-1973, 34% came from worker families, 22,5% from peasant families, about 40% from families belonging to the intelligentsia and only 3% from the former middle and upper classes. However, chances for children from worker and peasant families to enter secondary and higher education remained relatively low and worsened from the end of the 1960s. The improvement of educational levels has been largely the result of the extension of basic vocational education and, to a lesser extent, of full secondary vocational and general education. This has taken place

within the context of forced extensive industrialization, rapidly increasing the need for trained industrial workers (Heyns and Bia lecki 1990).

In analyzing the relationship between education and social structure in Poland, one has to keep in mind that in the course of "socialist industrialization" the position of intelligentsia in society has progressively deteriorated, especially - but not only - in terms of their income ranking. While, for example, still in 1967 the average income of higher education graduates was almost twice as high as that of skilled workers and more than 1,5 as high as the salaries of foremen, in 1976 their relative incomes dropped to 1,7 and 1,5 respectively, and in 1980 to 1,4 and 1,2 (Pohoski 1987). While between 1960-1975 the wages of skilled workers amounted to 90% of white-collar workers (including managers), during the 1980s the minimum average payment of blue collar and white collar workers employed in the state economy were virtually equal. With employment demand loosing its initial vigor and flows of fresh school-leavers being undisturbed, the decreasing "profitability" of education was, however, highly selective and affected most of all those with higher education who did not have access to economic or political positions of power. In the recruitment for "nomenklatura" positions personal achievement was considered "but only when a candidate is politically suitable" (Wasilewski 1989). As a result, higher positions were not necessarily occupied by people with higher qualifications or better competencies.

The political rethorics of "equal opportunity" and "social promotion" that accompanied the development of a socialist society in post-war Poland have found in fact some empirical backing during the 1950s and 1960s when the younger generations were able to profit from wider access to higher education and societal positions. This situation changed drastically during the 1970s. Although the educational system continued to provide educational opportunities that went far ahead of what the labor market was able to absorb (even in terms of basic vocational education), adequate positions for graduates were effectively blocked. The situation was intensified by a gradual overstaffing of enterprises as a result of hoarding policies by enterprise management. This has brought many disillusions, especially among the skilled workers who belonged to the post-war baby boom generation. Their resentments were increasingly aimed at people in power positions who were the first to be blamed for their lack of competence and abuse of power for personal gains (Zaborowski 1988, Wnuk-Lipinski 1989). From among the workers, the most critical groups were to be found among the graduates of Basic and Secondary Vocational Schools with a working class background (Adamski 1990). The final effects of this growing dissatisfaction are well known.

In conclusion, we can say that the post-war educational system in Poland proved to be quite successful in the initial period in transforming the structure of society as aimed for by the new socialist system, offering especially advancement for the lower classes. The capability of generating new structures and "legitimizing" the political system through social advancement was short lived though. While the socialist system proved to be unable to modernize its economy, the educational system started to reproduce during the 1970s the type of skills and social structure that had been developed during the period of extensive industrialization of the 1950s and 1960s. This structure was politically desirable, at least in the short run, but became highly dysfunctional in economic and social terms. In an attempt to overcome this structural contradiction educationalists tried to redefine the role of education in society. Instead of providing a mechanism for vertical social promotion the school system should promote horizontal diffusion: "an equalization of all socio-occupational roles, regardless of their place in the social division of labor" (Report on the State of Education in Poland 1973). Recent history has learnt that this was not acceptable for the majority of Polish people.

The educational reform, repeatedly formulated over the past twenty years and now again on the agenda, aiming at reducing the impact of basic vocational education in favor of secondary (general or vocational) education has lost its former ideological opposition. However, the desired composition of the social structure in Poland has been only one of the factors that accounted for the failures of educational reform. Other factors are still operating such as

a) the compensatory role that basic vocational education has played versus primary education,

b) the academic nature of general education,

c) traditional patterns of school- and occupational choice among working class and farmer families,

d) the nature of jobs provided by enterprises based on their types of products, technology and work organization,

e) the apparent absence of reform implementation capacities, etc.

Although we have not been able to trace comprehensive evaluations concerning the fate of past educational reforms in Poland, any future reform policy would have to be based on the lessons that are to be learned from the past.

2.3. Employment structures and labor market developments

The nature of the inherited labor market and employment structure can be considered as a principal source of concern for the ongoing transformation of Polish society. In terms of employment structure, problems are linked with the structural backwardness of the Polish economy as characterized by (a) a relatively high proportion of GNP being produced by a high number of small and primitive agricultural farmholdings, (b) the dominant position of heavy industries absorbing the lion's share of the labor force, and (c) a quantitatively and qualitatively underdeveloped service sector. A second issue of concern is formed by the typical phenomenon of "unemployment within the enterprise" resulting from the labor hoarding strategies of former enterprise management in response to the problems of the shortage economy (Gora 1992).

Perhaps the most symptomatic development during the 1970s and 1980s is the drop of the share of the economic active among the able-bodied population. The intake of the latter has constantly been falling from 9% in the period 1971-75, to 6% in the years 1976-80, and 3% from 1986-90. The population census also indicates that for the decade 1978-88 the number of those deriving their main income from work has decreased with 2%, whereas the number of income holders dependent either on social assistance or private capital, or else on part-time work increased by almost 68%. In consequence, while in 1978 for every 100 "full-time" workers there were about 23 people supporting themselves from social assistance or part-time work, the share of the latter has grown to 40% ten years later (CSO 1991).

The "normal" consequences of aging of the population have been intensified by two additional factors: (a) a high morbidity risk and a rising share of handicapped among the working-aged population, and (b) withdrawal of workers from the labor market as a result of the introduction of early retirement and child-rearing schemes - social provisions once introduced by the socialist administration in order to reduce the risks of open unemployment. As a result, the numerical relations between wage- and salary-earners, on the one hand, and those dependent on social payments, on the other, have shifted in favor of the latter.

A second development, equally leading to income redistribution, was induced by the net shift of the share of the employed from the production to the service sectors. In the last decade of socialist administration (1978-88), this trend was marked by a decrease of agricultural and industrial labor in favor of the quasi-commercialized branches of commerce, transport, and electricity-, gas-, and water services, and also in favor of the state sponsored social services (health, education, culture). Under the neo-liberal economic policy, the drift away from

the production sectors continued, this time in favor of the small privatized service firms in trade and commerce. Within the employee segment, this has led to a shift from blue collar to white collar workers.

Although there was recently a clear shift from public (state-owned) to private employment sectors, the net effects in terms of employment creation and the formation of a sustained middle class, are as yet negligible. According to the latest estimates of the Central Statistical Office (CSO), the aggregate proportion of independent employers and self-employed has remained about 27-28% from 1985 - 1990, with the majority of these being small private farmers and the number of those self-employed in industry, crafts and commerce increasing only from 3% to 8%. In majority, these are very small and unstable family businesses (Tulski and Wozniakowski 1992). Polish private farmers, both due to their numbers (presenting more than 1/5 of the economically active population) and demographic composition (relatively aged) and due to the changes in their economic environment (open food markets, increasing urban unemployment, unaccessible bank loans) are facing a very harsh future and their share in the total labor force is likely to be reduced dramatically asking for substantial changes in rural sector policies (Kwiecinski 1992). The occupational composition of the Polish work force at the eve of systemic transformation clearly indicates the scope of restructuralization in terms of job and qualification changes (See also Table 2).

Table 2.
Economically active population in Poland by socio-occupational categories in 1980 and 1990 (in %).

Socio-occupational category	1988	1990
Managers	1,4	0,8
Specialists in non-technical jobs	2,9	3,9
Specialists in technical jobs	3,7	2,8
Office employees medium level	9,9	11,4
Office employees lower level	4,6	4,4
Service employees	8,2	6,9
Lower supervisors in industry	1,8	1,5
Skilled workers	22,4	24,0
Unskilled workers	11,1	9,2
Laborers	1,5	1,7
Peasants	20,1	22,0
Self-employed outside agriculture	3,5	4,5

Source: W. Zaborowski, 1991

With the labor stock growing, although on a diminishing scale, and the economic recession advancing, there has inevitably been an increase of the economically idle population, both among those formerly working and among school-leavers. Under the new economic conditions this labor reserve has received the status of unemployed and is, when registered, entitled to receive unemployment benefits. The relative number of registered job seekers as compared to the overall active manpower has increased dramatically from 1,5% in March 1990 to almost 12% by the end of 1991. CSO estimates that the unemployment level may rise by the end of 1992 to about 18,5%. In absolute figures this would amount to 3,5 million people which is the equivalent of the overall employment in the manufacturing industry in Poland in 1990. It is generally understood that present registered unemployment only reveals the top of the ice-berg since most of the state-owned factories have not yet seriously started to dismiss workers in group lay-offs. Contrary to the farmers population, the majority of the industrial labor force is relatively young and better-educated (Sopniewska 1991, Kwiatkowski 1992, Sztanderska 1992).

While it is relatively easy to say where the problems are located, it is much more difficult to assess branches and sectors that have good employment prospects. We have found it difficult to locate any policy document which would visualize long-term development options for the Polish employment system and on which, in turn, educational policy priorities could be based (Karpinski 1992). This is not surprising, however, since also modern, and more or less stabilized western economies find it increasingly difficult to produce such forecasts. Many western countries have indeed given up altogether the attempt to produce long-term manpower forecasts and to base educational policies on them. (See further Chapter 3).

Two substitute sources that have dealt with future employment forecasts have been used by us nevertheless. The first one is the 1991 report from the Polish Academy of Sciences on "Current civilizational changes of Poland". The second source of information is the currently ongoing public debate on the direction of the transformation policy in Poland.

The report of the Polish Academy of Sciences is about the long-term options for the restructuring of the economy and is consequently of a rather general nature. It advocates that a long-term development strategy for Poland should center around modernization of the civilizational infrastructure of the country, and mentions as possible competitive sectors for the Polish economy: pharmacy, telecommunications, biotechnology, and software production. The report also argues in favor of "rural industrialization", and more in particular envisages a radical improvement of the infrastructural environment of agricultural production

which could make rural life much more attractive and would bring a halt to the migration to industrial urban centers. Finally, the report argues for a better match between education and work through

a) the development of firms that would have an in-plant qualification and innovation dynamic. Internal quality "suction" mechanisms should replace the traditional policy to "push" from outside qualified personnel into economically and technologically "insensitive "environments. The latter policy has been at the roots of the past mismatches between - high - qualifications generated by the educational system and - low - qualifications asked for by the employment system (Kluczinski, Opolski and Wiodarski 1985).

b) Expand access to all forms of education for everybody, and thus to improve the communication between the different generations and social strata in society. The use of non-school based educational media should be further developed.

c) Taking over by the school system some of the protectionist functions earlier performed by the employment system in the socialization of the youth, at least for the initial period of transition.

The present critical debate in Poland concerning a possible redefinition of the transformation strategy to be applied, concerns itself with short- and medium term aspects. This is an ongoing discussion, evaluating the achievements and risks of the initial neo-liberal policies and proposing alternative instruments, especially in view of re-balancing economic and social dimensions. Some of the positions taken may serve to elucidate priorities for vocational education policies (report of the Polish Economic Association 1991).

One of the key issues of this debate is the realization that the transition period will cover probably a much longer time period than initially foreseen. This would mean that for a considerable period a very heterogeneous and complex pattern of employment will continue to exist, with a mixture of - strategically chosen - reform measures, especially in heavy industry and small backward farming, and the coexistence of state-owned and private productive units. Such measures would be part of the anti-recession policy and be aimed at restoring economic solvency of the state and investment capacities of those industrial sectors which still form the main source of state income (and of public spending as well). Such policy would of course also influence educational provision and infrastructure in these areas, in the sense of providing at least "interim" occupational profiles.

Simultaneously, it is argued that due to the absence of market mechanisms which would regulate the allocation of both capital and labor (but where do they exist?), there is place for intervention by the state in terms of an active employment policy (Kabaj 1992). The development of an active employment policy may have the additional positive effect of breaking up traditional divisions of competencies between various ministries that until now so often block efficient action. Active employment policies may also lead to shifts in executive power from the central to the regional and local agencies. Clearly, both processes would have immense educational implications. Unfortunately, the 1992 budget cuts have negatively affected such policies.

One even more challenging part of the present debate puts the educational and employment problems of to-day's Poland within a broader international perspective of trans-national migration and cooperation. The recently concluded Association Agreement between Poland and the EC indeed forces us to take a wider international perspective, if only because EC legislation will allow for international free mobility and Poland will have to prepare itself to be able to participate in such mobility. Table 3 shows clearly that demographic developments do not run parallel in all parts of Europe, possibly leading to shortages of manpower in one part while there will be surpluses in other parts. Mobility will also continue to take place as the result of existing differences in salary and welfare levels in Europe.

Several solutions are being discussed. Polish experts advocate an expansion of the legal schemes allowing for temporary employment and training for young Poles. These are meant to serve not only the improvement of income opportunities, but also to provide for inter-cultural education, so crucial for the success of the transformation at ground level. Foreign experts tend to advise for solutions inside the country, through investments in training and employment firms, as the entry and exit costs for temporary migration are very high. Yet another option, so far only hesitantly probed during meetings of representatives of East European countries, is the prospect of creating "developmental zones" in border areas (Carpatian region, Silesia, Baltic area) which, by combining mutually available resources, may assist in settling the local potential for trans-border mobility into commercial co-habitation.

The debate shows not only that the education and employment problems of Poland cannot be effectively solved inside Poland. It also indicates that Poland's education and employment problems are very much the concern of Poland's European neighbors.

Table 3.
Increase of the population of working age (15-59/65 years old) in the European Economic Space over the years 1990-2010 in thousands.

	Total	of which			
		1991 -1995	1996 -2000	2001 -2005	2006 -2010
European Economic Space	6405	3632	1920	1357	- 504
- Western Europe	-1015	1135	-161	-517	-1472
- EEC	-1042	966	-268	-550	-1190
- EFTA	27	169	107	33	- 282
Post socialist countries	7420	2497	2081	1874	968
- EEC associated, of	4369	1495	1461	1077	336
which Poland	3518	927	1184	981	426
- Balkan countries	3051	1002	620	797	- 90

Source: Calculated on the basis of the UN 1990 Revision of the Global Population Estimates and Projections.

In summarizing the above analysis, one could say that huge changes are to be expected in the social and occupational structures of Polish society. However, at present, we can only define these changes in general terms (decline of agricultural and industrial work force, internal reshaping of industrial work-force resulting from the shift from extractive and heavy industry towards manufacturing of consumer goods and high-tech industry, growth of service sector and middle classes). So far, these structural changes are hampered by a number of factors: (a) comparatively shallow employment demand from the private service sector, (b) shortage of capital to modernize and restructure the state industrial sector (c) fiscally prohibitive conditions for self-modernization of the agricultural sector. There is no consensus as yet with regard to future employment scenarios (Ksiezopolski 1991). Which sectors and branches will exactly be promoted or will have development chances is very much open at the moment. We shall return to this matter in section 4.3.3. The controversy about the criteria to be used for state assistance in the restructuring of industry (branch-wise delimitation, regional unemployment risks, individual solvency of industrial firms) have not yet been solved. This also makes it impossible to define the possible role of education and training in a traditional way, i.e. in terms of directly preparing for specific clearly defined occupational profiles. **Education and training will**

rather have to prepare for uncertainty, making it possible for individuals to be flexible, mobile and active. The tendency, to be observed among educational decision makers at all levels to wait for guidelines from the side of the economic decision makers, therefore, is not realistic and may become dangerous over time. This, however, would imply a profound restructuring of policy making inside the educational system, and of the VET system in particular. Finally, the question may be raised whether the problems of education and employment really can be discussed as purely Polish problems, or whether they should rather be put in a much wider European framework.

2.4. Educational spending and educational aspirations

Against the background of the actual economic and financial crisis and the developments on the labor market described earlier one could ask the question to what extent Polish society is able to uphold its potential for the reproduction of its human capital assets. There is a growing risk that this potential, foremost in terms of its qualitative aspects, but increasingly also quantitatively, has come under serious danger. Clearly, while education and science are represented by relatively strong pressure groups, the issue does not only refer to education but also touches other, equally eligible public services such as health, security, and public administration.

The trend to reduce budgetary spending on social welfare and education has been initiated long ago by the various socialist administrations, presumably in order to restore economic performance but in reality rather in order to rescue ailing industries and to retain full employment. The trend has been perpetuated by the subsequent neo-liberal cabinets on doctrinal and pragmatic grounds alike. First, all costs of subsistence which before had been subsidized from the state budget, either directly or indirectly through price controls (housing, energy, transport, recreation, food) are progressively transferred to the family budgets. Welfare and social policy became restricted to specific and clearly definable target groups. This has happened without major improvements of salary levels for the ordinary citizen. Within the context of our analysis at least three consequences of this policy should be pointed out:

- Those industrial enterprises, predominantly state owned , which in the past bore substantial costs of welfare (including education and training), have withdrawn their financial support, forced as they were to start operating according to free market principles. Other public administration agencies (at municipality or county level) have not been able to fill this gap.

- Rising unemployment, increasing dependency ratios and pauperization, especially of the old aged, have led to extra claims on such social provisions from the state budget. The traditional clients of public spending, such as health, education and culture, found themselves in a formerly unexperienced situation of "competition" with the more vulnerable and needy.

- Under conditions of declining tax revenues, expanding social insurance and welfare expenditures, and rising costs of internal and international debts, the 1991 budget deficit increased in comparison to the preceding year. While there is strong pressure from the international financial community to keep the deficit below 5% of GNP, further reductions on public spending are to be foreseen, including education.

During the years between 1976-1990, the negative effects of decreasing public spending on education were largely counterbalanced by the then prevailing demographic developments. During this period enrollment in secondary and tertiary education decreased from 3,1 million students in 1975 to 2,6 million in 1990. But the corresponding age groups (15-24 years old) decreased even stronger. As a result, the global scolarization rates rose in the case of the 15-18 years old from 734 per thousand to 780 per thousand, while for those between 19-24 years old, they rose from 199 to 205 per thousand. However, the real enrollment victim of decreased educational spending was the sector of extra-mural (or adult) education, in the case of which the absolute numbers of participants has fallen sharply, by almost 60%. Figures for vocational education and general education follow the same tendency (with the exception of post-matriculate professional lyceums). See table 4.

If the subsequent cuts in public spending for education have most visibly affected the provision of adult education and enrollment in day-time schools have even slightly increased, it may be assumed that (a) decreased public spending must have had negative effects on the quality of day-time vocational education and (b) that the increase of costs that undoubtedly has taken place must have been borne for a substantial part by the family budgets. A recent estimation from the side of the Ministry of National Education mentions that parents presently contribute 17% of the costs incurred by public education. It should be

Table 4.
Enrollment of vocational schools in 1975 and 1990 per thousand of the relevant age group.

	Age group					
	15-18		19-24		25-59	
	1975	1990	1975	1990	1975	1990
Basic vocational schools	333	347	7	3	-	-
- full time daily	330	346	6	3	-	-
- extra mural	3	1	1	-	-	-
Secondary vocational schools	194	238	80	65	9	2
- full time daily	170	221	29	36	-	-
- extra mural	24	17	51	29	9	2
Post-matriculate professional lyceum	1	1	21	31	1	1
- full time daily	1	1	16	24	-	-
- extra mural	-	-	5	7	1	1

Source: A. Józefowicz on the basis of CSO data.

reminded here that already in 1991 the Ministry of National Education was forced to reduce part of the regular weekly tuition program, the number of administrative staff in schools, and the overall payroll in general education. Education is a composite vessel and the losses incurred initially at primary level will be transferred in time to further learning.

The issue of private spending on education has to be discussed against the background of existing relatively low salary levels, on the one hand, and a growing income inequality, on the other. The question then has to be posed to what extent rich families are **willing** to support education for their children, and whether the poor families are **able** to do so. Both the freedom of choice for private household budget spending (and the increased number of options), and the overall pauperization of a considerable number of income-earners, as result of steadily increasing costs of living, may negatively affect the global propensity of the population for private (individual) investments in education. Available information concerning the development of educational aspirations and spending preferentials of private households give a rather negative picture of the present situation.

Sociological research has indicated a dramatic drop in the position of education in the hierarchies of the value system of Polish citizens, experienced already during the declining phase of state socialism. One may presume that this trend has continued in the years 1990-91 (see Table 5).

Table 5.
Income, Education, and Work as Important values in the hierarchy of life aims of Poles in 1977, 1983 and 1986 (in %).
(Answers to the question: What importance do you attach to the following aims in life?)

Aims in life	1977 %	1983 %	1986 %	difference 77-86 %
High income	63	68	73	+ 10
High level of education	56	35	33	- 23
Interesting work	55	50	52	- 3
Managerial post	28	14	17	- 11

Source: W. Wisniewski 1990

The information summarized in Table 5 also points out a striking disconnection between the declining importance attached to education and to achieving higher managerial positions, on the one hand, as opposed to the growing attachment to higher income, on the other. It seems that this disconnection not only reflects the protracted hardships of the present crisis. It also reveals the typical contradiction between educational aspirations and income rewards as offered by the previous state socialist system. The restoration of a "normal" relationship between educational and work aspirations and attainments, and their economic rewards would hopefully constitute an important condition for the success of any transition policy.

From the little, that we can learn from available statistics concerning spending preferentials of private households in 1990 four conclusions can be drawn (Statistical Yearbook 1991, pp 215 -217):

- The individual family outlays for "culture, education and recreation" are closely connected with social position. On average their share among white-collar households exceeds the equivalent relative spending of blue-collar households by 30%, and of farmer households by 163%.

- Such expenditures rank second when higher incomes would be available among employee households (after housing), and third among farmer households (after housing and transport - or car maintenance).

- There is presently a competition going on between investments in durable goods (apartment, car) and culture or education.

- The statistical sources also indicate that the class of the "intelligentsia" would remain interested in steering its children towards privileged social positions through the ladder of secondary general and university education. Should the clients of the VET system continue to be recruited largely from the workers and farmers strata, then their family budgets, almost irrespective of their level, would prove to be an unpromising partner for educational investments.

One of the obvious, and in many respects intended consequences of the economic transformation is the gradual commercialization of public services that were once free of charge, including education. Commercialization occurred as the typical market reaction to unsatisfied customer demand. Inadequate provision and low quality of educational offers in such fields as foreign languages, management, accountancy, informatics has prompted the appearance of commercial training providers. Unavoidably, due to ignorance of clients, lack of competition and the absence of a well functioning quality control system, the quality and seriousness of these private training institutions differ widely.

Another step towards commercialization, this time within the formal school system, was taken by the 1991 Law on Education which allowed for the operation of non-public schools at all educational levels. Those private schools that have been established since usually offer broader educational programs, a better qualified staff and a more favorable student-teacher ratio than is the case for public schools. Although these schools are entitled to receive some subventions from the state budget, admission costs and tuition fees are too high for the large majority of the population. Enrollment in private schools remained at a negligible level during 1991-92: 0,2% at elementary level, 0,3% in case of post-compulsory vocational education, and 2,3% for secondary general lyceums.

A third form of commercialization is formed by what one could call "economic emergency" ventures being resorted to by some public schools in an attempt to balance their schools budgets: renting-out premises and facilities outside teaching hours, offering courses to local businesses etc. Such cases, however, are still rare, and opportunities to do so unevenly distributed over urban and rural areas. The notion of school-fostered-formation of the country's future elites, stipulated for the first time by the educational reform reports of 1989 and 1990,

has thus materialized through the back door, if under somewhat unexpected conditions: the brain selection has become substituted by income disparities.

To summarize: out of the three pillars of educational financing - industry, state budget, and private households - the VET system has almost lost entirely the support of the first (with the exception of parts of the crafts training), may well become an orphan of the second, and appears to be the least attractive field for educational investment for the last one. If it is accepted that a profound reorganization of the Polish VET system will be asked for, then an amelioration of the unfavorable financial "environment" seems to be a necessary prerequisite. However, as will be argued in the next paragraph, the Polish VET system needs more than simply more money.

2.5. Demographic developments and manpower supply

While there is much uncertainty about the future employment developments, especially in terms of manpower **demand**, the only long-term - and at the same time the most reliable - information concerns the future demographic development of Poland. Estimations concerning the future **supply** of educated manpower practically form the only stable basis for scenarios to develop - or respond to - future demand for manpower. These estimations, however, do not provide an optimistic picture either. They do allow us, on the other hand, to define some clearer criteria for educational reforms and to introduce the time factor for the planning of these reforms.

The first conclusion that can be drawn from available demographic data (CSO 1991) is the most worrisome. The fortunate coincidence of the 1980s when the decrease of the combined absorbing capacity of both the employment system and of full-time post-compulsory schooling was partly cushioned by a simultaneous decrease of the relevant age cohorts, no longer holds true. On the contrary. The number of young people that belong to the age cohort that forms the potential pool of secondary education (15-18 years old) will increase until the year 2000. The number of those who will look for either a job or a place in tertiary education will grow until the year 2005. Only in the course of the second decade of the next century will Poland experience the consecutive, and most probably lasting, decrease of demographic pressure on the education and employment system (Kotowska 1991).

More telling perhaps is the fact, that the ongoing process of aging will lead to shift the main burden of economic performance on the shoulders of that part of the mature generations who are already for a long time out of the schooling system. Of the 3,1 million people that will be added to the stock of the able-bodied

population (those between 15 and 59/64 years of age) during the years 1991-2005, only 7% will add to the initial stock volume of those under the age of 45, and the rest (93%!) to the older generations who are now between 30-45 years of age (State Population Commission Report 1991). In the EC, where similar trends are taking place, this has already led to an increasing appreciation of measures to develop systems of further and continuous education (Jones 1991). For Poland this would imply a radical reversal of developments occurring until now.

Under such demographic conditions, and on the assumption that the 1988 labor force participation rates shall keep constant during the 1990s, the manpower supply has been estimated. The forecast tells us, that out of the 19 million able bodied people expected to form the stock of the labor force by the end of the century, there will be about 3 million of young labor market entrants leaving the educational system during the 1990s, about 6 million people older than 45 years of age (and as things stand now, most probably out of reach of education!), but 10 million people aged between 25-44, who will be both in the position, and strongly in need of further education and/or retraining (Jozefowicz 1991).

The forecast makes it also possible to specify the demographic trends according to regions: there is a small variation (5-10%) of demographically generated labor supply during the 1990s in the various macro regions in Poland. However, when we add the expected decline of labor demand over this period in regions characterized by occupational mono-cultures (heavy industry in Silesia and Western Mazowsze, and agriculture in the 3 eastern regions), than we may expect a dramatic and significant regional disparity in supply-demand relationships. This would ask, consequently, for a regionally differentiated educational allocation policy.

In view of the above trends, the Polish VET system is about to face the following challenges:

- To properly respond - together with secondary general schooling - in preparing larger numbers of adolescents for adult life. We would assume that the traditional big role of the VET system, and especially that of the Basic Vocational Schools, would decrease in favor of the secondary general and the secondary vocational schools. There will simply be no place on the labor market for high numbers of young people with very narrow forms of initial, short-term vocational education. A much broader vocational profile will be asked from a considerable higher number of young labor market entrants. For a certain number of young people the school will also have to function as a

temporary delay for labor market entry. The question will be as to how to achieve such a change.

- To develop a country-wide and flexibly organized infrastructure for further education and retraining, in order to assist the young and adult population alike to pass through the difficult transformation phase which may last for several decades.

- To reshape the existing management structure of the VET system from the once prevailing vertical branch- and sector-wise orientation into a more flexible and professionally open horizontal structure with a regional, or perhaps even local orientation, capable of providing comprehensive educational solutions for regionally specific re-employment and development programs.

3. VET challenges from an international perspective

3.1. The problems of orientation on western structures and developments

The transformation of the earlier socialist economies into market economies involves more than simply changing the principle of economic organization from centralized state planning to market control. In all the Central and East European societies this transformation also involves a more or less momentous structural change and modernization process, affecting institutions, attitudes and behavioral patterns. The previous form of state planning has resulted in one-sided areas of emphasis and isolated structural developments, which usually brought forth a preponderance of industrial and/or agricultural production, both in the separate national economies and the entire Comecon. Consequently, the transition to a market-led economy will have to be accompanied by structural changes leading to a stronger development of the service sector, partial de-industrialization (for Poland a shrinkage of the agriculture sector as well), and increased diversification of industrial production. Clearly, this will have profound implications for the skill- and qualification structures of the countries.

The previous isolation from the capitalist world market has also led to a deficit in technological development. In order to raise productivity and to be competitive in the world market in the near future, a modernization of the Central and East European societies will be necessary. But modernization is not only a technical process, modernization is successful only if the social infrastructure can be modified whereby, again, the educational and vocational training program plays a key role.

The transformation also means more than simply changing institutions. People have learned to live with and within the institutions built up by the centrally planned socialist economy. Several generations have become socialized in their ways of thinking and behavior along lines that are now largely considered as dysfunctional for the further development of their countries. The change of the minds of the people is one of the major educational challenges to date.

We have to be clear, however, that the transformation of a centrally-planned socialist economy into a market economy cannot be interpreted as a fixed process or concept, as if there was one best path which every economy should or could follow. We have learned through the history and the present situations of the capitalistic societies that the market economy is not, whether viewed historically or culturally, a single organizational concept. Market economies are

affected by the environment in which they exist as well as by their own unique patterns of development. We can differentiate between at least three different forms of current market economies which differ in respect to the relationship between the state, the interests of various groups within the society and the market process:

a) pure market-economy systems ("market-led-economies", for example England),

b) systems with high levels of state intervention ("state-led-systems", for example France in the 1960s and 1970s as the plannification took place) and finally

c) mixed systems in which the state intervenes through legislation but at the same time organized groups within the society assume market regulating functions (for example Japan and Germany) (Zysman 1983; see also Frydman and Rapaczynski 1992).

In this respect, the transformation process raises the question of which type of market economy should be achieved in Poland. But this question does not go far enough. In addition, one has to realize that the process of transformation is not solely determined or steered by the mere transfer of political, economic and legal regulations and - as argued before - that the modernization of industrial production is not only a question of technical and organizational innovation. **The processes of economic and technical change are closely bound to the social peculiarities of the specific society in which they occur.** In the highly industrialized capitalist societies it is possible to identify different models of production, different labor market structures and different vocational training systems in spite of similar levels of technological development and the common fundamental structures of the market economy. **This shows that in the actual transformation process in the Central and East European countries market models and forms of organization of the western countries cannot simply be copied.** Rather one must carefully consider the circumstances and peculiarities of one's society (its social structure, its system of education, the mentality of its citizens) to determine what can be applied. Particularly when one considers the reorganization of vocational training systems it seems important to remember that the internal circumstances of the society at the beginning of the transformation process are probably more important for the course of the process than the concepts, organizational models or techniques which can be copied from other societies. We are dealing with a process of adaptation and a collective and institutional learning process rather than an imitation.

Thus, while all European countries are facing more or less similar challenges, they all differ with respect to the ways and possibilities to effectively cope with them. Based on their past traditions and institutional frameworks some countries will be better equipped than others. This is one of the main reasons why presently within the European Communities individual countries are investing so much in comparative assessments: what can be learned from other countries in order to improve their own performance? The international challenges referred to are going to be faced by Poland as well. They form the wider perspective for assessing the internal constraints and challenges that we have analyzed in the previous chapter. What are these international challenges and how do various Western countries cope with them?

3.2. Manpower planning for an uncertain future

Particularly around the 1960s, several European countries have made systematic attempts at planning vocational education and training on the basis of long-term forecasts of manpower requirements. But the value of this approach has increasingly been questioned for several reasons:

- The period of continuous growth which took place after World War II is over and the international economy is subject to wide and unexpected fluctuations. The level of internationalization to-day is such that it is almost impossible for any country to avoid being influenced by the international context and to follow its own independent path.

- Supposing that economic forecasts are possible, it has proved to be very difficult to translate them in terms of employment and of occupational structure. A given level of production can be achieved through a variety of ways in terms of technology, organization and occupational mix. The translation from occupations into training requirements is even more difficult. There are also different ways to recruit for a given job: among young graduates or school-leavers, from other firms, or inside the firm, through promotion, transfer and re-training. To a large extent, educational profiles can be substituted for each other; they are defined in different ways by different firms and at different periods. The final outcome largely depends on the nature of supply and demand and how these influence each other on the labor market.

These considerations explain why no country to-day expects to be able to use detailed manpower forecasts to be translated into specific training requirements expressed in quantitative terms. In Germany, for example, projections of very broad types of activity may at best serve as a background for major policy

decisions. In the United Kingdom, projections of occupational groups do not have any direct impact on training at all. In France, occupational forecasting has been given up altogether by the official institution in charge of economic studies. But the need for some kind of indicators on future directions has been felt again and the opportunity to undertake more systematic forecasting is now being discussed. In this discussion, reference is made to the experience of the United States, where the Bureau of Labor Statistics establishes, and regularly updates, detailed long-term projections of the occupational structure of the labor force. But these are not directly used for defining training objectives. They serve as a basic information for the large number of education authorities at the decentralized level and for a public debate on the broad orientation of training and on the guidance of individuals.

As a whole, it may be said that in all Western countries, there has been a shift from detailed quantitative forecasting to a broader analysis of possible directions of change, with more emphasis on the qualitative than on the quantitative aspects of such change. From this point of view, major trends affecting the occupational structure and the skill contents can be observed in all advanced countries.

3.3. Changes in occupational structure, skills and training requirements

During the last two decades, significant changes have taken place in advanced market economies, as a result of the combination of three factors: (a) **competition**, (b) **technology** and (c) **organization**.

a) The development of transport and communications, the relaxing of regulations, the growing faith in market forces and liberal ideology, the crumbling of frontiers and the increasing internationalization of business, all contribute to make competition fiercer and more widespread. As a result, it is no more sufficient to produce large series at low cost and there has been a substantial shift towards:

- upgrading the quality of products and of services and often offering the client or consumer a combination of both;
- striving for a greater variety of goods and services in order to attract customers and to adapt to a constantly changing demand;
- diversification and "customizing" of products in order to respond to the specific needs of segments of the markets and of individuals;
- seeking ways of reducing costs through more sophisticated management and cost control.

In this context, manufacturing in advanced economies tends to shift from the mass production of low value-added goods requiring mostly unskilled labor, to the production of a variety of high value-added goods requiring a more skilled work force. Similar trends can be observed in the service sector as well (Piore and Sable 1984; Kern and Schumann 1984; Baethge and Oberbeck 1986; Womack, Jones and Roos 1990).

b) These trends have contributed to a pressure for more flexible production systems. At the same time, information technologies, which in the first generation were very rigid, timely offered new opportunities for more flexibility and diversity with the development of numerically-controlled machine-tools, robots, networks of on-line terminals and micro-computers. These circumstances allowed for a rapidly expanding utilization of computer-based technologies for a wider range of activities and of functions. They are not only used to produce at lower costs large series of goods and services. They are even more useful in improving research, development, management and communication, in all areas, and in offering a wider range of products and of services.

c) In relation to these developments, the traditional forms of work organization based on Taylorist principles of hierarchy, division of labor, rigid job assignment and de-skilling were put into question. In the 1970s, it became increasingly apparent that these principles were hardly acceptable for a more educated work force with greater expectations and aspirations. Its assumed efficiency also became seriously questioned. But it later became even more obvious that the earlier type of work organization was not consistent with new economic and technical requirements. There is more interest to-day for autonomous, creative and adaptable workers, which is possible only in a different organizational set-up, based on flexibility, some degree of decentralization, delegation of authority and group work (Grootings a.o. 1989).

Of course, such changes have not affected overnight all firms and organizations, but this is to-day the dominant trend and it is likely to last.

The combination of these factors affected skills and training requirements in a number of ways:

a) It is now **increasingly difficult to define clearly and permanently occupations (or trades) referring to a product and to a stable technology**, as used to be the case. Instead, there are constantly changing job assignments, whose borders tend to be blurred.

b) A **shift from blue collar to white collar jobs** can be observed everywhere, as a result of increased productivity in agriculture and manufacturing, of a growing complexity of other functions and of an expanding demand for services. They now represent some 70% of all jobs in the most advanced economics. A wide variety of such jobs may be found in all types of activity and at all skill levels (Gershuny and Miles 198 ; Zuboff 1988).

c) There is an overall **tendency towards upgrading of the occupational structure**: automation and rationalization, as well as the competition of low-wages countries tend to abolish simple and repetitive tasks (and therefore most of the unskilled jobs), whereas the growing sophistication of technologies and of organizations requires increasing numbers of managers and engineers, but also of technicians and middle management personnel.

d) For a given occupation (as long as it remains possible to define it), there is often a tendency towards **broader and richer job contents**. This is not only because of the complexity of technologies, but also because workers are required to be less specialized, cover a wider range of functions and to understand a broader and constantly changing environment.

e) Although much emphasis is given to technology in the literature and public statements concerning the modern economy, **training for using new technologies is probably not the most important and most difficult challenge with which training systems are being faced.** Except for a relatively small number of specialists, using the new technologies is becoming increasingly easy for most users, especially in white collar jobs. In industry, since machines are taking care of the majority of the simple and repetitive tasks, what is left for workers is primarily what the machines cannot do, i.e. work requiring adaptability, creativeness and, above all, human relationship. This asks at the same time however for higher levels of theoretical and technical knowledge, especially for situations when the machines do not function as they should do.

f) In this context, business firms are attempting to recruit their employees, not so much on the basis of their technical knowledge and know-how, but rather on the basis of their **broader competencies and personal characteristics**. Reliability, capacity for expression and problem solving, ability to learn, to cooperate with others, to be hard-working, to adapt to unexpected situations, to be innovative, and to care about the quality of products or services are often considered more important. If the role of degrees and diplomas is often on the increase, it is primarily because it is assumed that there is a better chance for

holders to possess those characteristics, rather than for the guarantee of their technical level (Baethge and Oberbeck 1986; Bertrand and Noyelle 1988).

g) In addition to these qualifications needed for the work place we can observe, from the vocational perspective of individuals, an increasing **significance of other abilities required in order to assert oneself in the labor market and in a quickly changing world**. It is known that the concept of a "job for life" is no longer valid and that more individual mobility and individual capabilities are necessary. This includes knowledge of developments on the labor market, as well as the willingness and ability, to independently procure information, understand the social effects of economic and technical developments, and the willingness to take part in further training.

   The individual mobility requirements are accompanied by higher demand for willingness and ability to accept political responsibility and take part in the shaping of work, the labor market and technology. One could mention here two factors which make an improvement of the potential for political organization necessary. The first concerns the intensified ecological risks of the industrialization and economic growth. The second is related to the necessary redistribution of work (and income) which will be increasingly difficult because the redistribution will, for the first time in history, involve qualified work.

   Both of these problems, brought forth by economic and technical developments, will not be automatically solved by free market mechanisms. Market developments encourage a more individualistic social behavior which is detrimental to finding solutions for these problems, therefore more effort in the educational and training processes will be necessary (Baethge a.o. 1988; Maccoby 1988; Jones 1991). **Thus, new combinations of technical and social skills become relevant.**

h) The developments sketched above do not imply that unqualified or low qualified activities will disappear; they will continue to play a role in both manufacturing and services, however in the future (as opposed to the past) such activities will affect only a minority of the work force. This causes new problems. What appears at first, and from the point of view of educational politics, as an advantage reveals, if one considers the structure of the labor market and the society, a much darker side. As employment becomes more dependent on qualifications and this is obviously the current tendency in the highly developed economies the lines of segmentation between the unqualified activities and the qualified activities become more pronounced and more

difficult to overcome. The professional mobility and personal liberty of the individual depends on whether he/she was able to attain basic competencies for learning ability, orientation and self adjustment at an early stage of life, either at home or at school. Individual chances of occupational and social growth also are bound more and more to the learning possibilities offered by the specific work conditions (Grootings 1991).

Within the structure of the labor market and the wider social structure there may be a **threat of a segmentation** between unqualified and qualified employees, which could hardly be mastered by further training: since many individuals within the most seriously threatened groups of the work force, the low qualified or unemployed, have never gained the basic competencies necessary for the qualification process. The problem mentioned here is outlined in varying degrees of clarity in almost all the western societies and could lead to the permanent contradiction of a shortage of qualified workers on the one side and high levels of unemployment on the other (Sengenberger 1987). **If the lines of segmentation become firmly established and cannot be counteracted through a timely preventive educational and training program, then the necessary redistribution of the available work, either now or in the future, will be impossible.** Because, as opposed to past situations, when the redistribution of work involved for the most part the redistribution of low qualified work, in the future the redistribution will involve qualified work. In the area of unqualified work there will simply not so much left to be redistributed.

i) In most market economies, the combination of the trend towards rising skill requirements and of higher demands by employers (facilitated by the level of unemployment) has resulted in a growing **risk of social exclusion for the weaker segments of the labor force**: youth with a low level of education (usually coming from underprivileged social groups), elderly workers, and especially women who wish to reenter the labor market. Facing this problem is not only a social priority; it is also an economic necessity that large groups of population should not remain unproductive, especially in view of the present demographic trends. Vocational training of course has a responsibility in this respect, but it has to be shared with general education and with employers.

3.4. The need for flexibility and responsiveness

Having realized how difficult it is to forecast future training requirements, the logical conclusion is that **the best way to adjust to an uncertain future is to give more flexibility to training systems and to make them more respon-**

sive to changing needs. This is not easy and in many countries there are recurrent criticisms about the rigidity and poor adaptation of training systems. But changes are taking place and a number of ways can be observed to approach these objectives, especially with respect to organization, contents, and provision.

In terms of **organization**, flexibility and responsiveness may be looked for in different ways. In Germany, the fact that most of the training is provided by business firms is a guarantee that it is not too remote from their needs. They also enjoy some leeway in the interpretation of programs designed at the Federal level. In the Netherlands, a considerable amount of autonomy is left to the schools and most of them cooperate closely with local business firms. In Italy, the transfer of most of the training responsibilities to regional authorities offers opportunities to adjust training contents to local needs. Even the French system, which used to be extremely centralized and bureaucratic is being progressively adjusted: regions are now free to set up some vocational courses in cooperation with industry, vocational schools are encouraged to work with local business and the Government is in favor of developing apprenticeship and an increased participation of industry in the design and provision of training programs.

Also with respect to the **contents** one can observe interesting developments. If, as it used to be the case in most traditional systems, training is organized on the basis of specialized courses preparing for specific occupations, the system does not leave much room for adaptation to changing requirements. This is why most countries have shifted to alternative approaches, which will be reviewed in more detail in the next chapter.

Similarly, when teachers, as the main **providers** of education and training, are life-time civil servants employed on a full-time basis, it may seriously limit the possibilities to adjust training to changing needs and technologies. Flexibility requires different forms of provision, which will also be discussed in more detail below.

Flexibility and responsiveness to changing needs do **not mean that training can be left entirely to market forces and managed on a day-to-day basis**. It necessarily requires a forward-looking approach, since it takes time between the initial decisions and the final result (availability of trained people on the labor market). And although training has first of all to serve economic objectives, it is also closely related to the educational system as a whole (and may be an integrated part of it), so that it also has a social dimension. Finally, education and training are complex activities which have to take into account various aspects and which are of interest for many social actors. For these reasons, flexibility has

to go along with some kind of planning (or of **monitoring**) of training activities. We shall return to this aspect later.

3.5. Common challenges, a variety of responses but no single model

The above analysis suggests that all industrialized countries are faced with a number of similar challenges: competition, internationalization, technological change, new expectations from the people, need for constant adjustment, changes in the demographic composition of the labor force, etc... This is a factor of convergence. At the same time, the examples of foreign experiences indicate that different countries react to these challenges in different ways. This is easily explained by the importance of the cultural dimension, of the institutional context and of historical traditions in the area of training and education.

It should be stressed again: **no foreign experience can be simply transferred in a different context.** Anyway, no system is perfect, as each system has its merits and its drawbacks. Foreign experiences, to which further reference will be made in the following chapter, should therefore be considered as food for thought, as indicators of possible alternative approaches, but not as models which could be readily adopted.

4. Issues facing vocational education and training: International experiences and challenges for Poland

4.1. Alternative architectures of VET systems

In this chapter we shall discuss a number of core issues facing vocational education and training:

a) structure and location of vocational education and training,

b) contents and curricula,

c) monitoring of the system,

d) resources, and

e) the provision of education and training for adults.

We shall proceed by first presenting some of the most salient international experiences for each of these issues, then we shall give a short description of the Polish situation, followed by some conclusions derived from the comparative confrontation. These conclusions will necessarily vary in nature. Sometimes we shall be able to give rather concrete recommendations, sometimes we shall have to restrict ourselves to indicating points for attention. In the last paragraph we shall summarize the confrontation between international experiences and the present state of the Polish VET system. In the next and final chapter we shall return in a more systematic way to what we consider to be possible lines of action.

A number of the issues to be dealt with in this chapter are well discussed in Poland, some of them even since a very long time. This refers especially to elements connected with the structure of the system and with the contents of education. Where this is the case we shall briefly resume the most recent discussions and comment on them from the international point of view. However, some of the issues that follow have not yet received sufficient attention in the Polish discussions. This is especially the case for the need to have a proper "monitoring" system. More in general, we are of the opinion that the discussion in Poland has concentrated until now a bit too much on the educational dimensions of vocational education and training (and this is one of the reasons for the existence of a large continuity in the Polish discussions over the past

twenty years.) At this level, there are also certain convergences with discussions in western countries. However, exactly the "external" dimensions of vocational education and training, that is to say its fundamentally changed role versus the labor market (or rather versus the newly developing employment system) and the future challenges that are posed in this respect for organization and management of the system, have not received proper attention. Due to this situation, both current definitions of problems as well as changes and reform proposals, in our opinion, are not really adequate. It is here, however, that the vocational education systems in western countries have recently undergone serious changes and a discussion of these may contribute to increase the awareness of their relevance among the Polish experts and decision-makers.

4.2. Structure and location of vocational education and training

4.2.1. The international experience

The international experience shows a variety of alternative ways to approach the basic issues concerning (a) the structure, and (b) location and provision of training.

(a) The first issue concerns the **relative role of general and technical education and of vocational training**. In very broad terms, it may be said that there are two different models:

- the European model, whereby pupils are oriented at a relatively early stage either towards general education leading to university, or towards some kind of vocational education or training preparing for an occupation;

- and the American model, whereby the large majority of pupils complete general education at high school, often receive some kind of higher education and then get a job without any prior training for an occupation. This model we also find in Japan.

There is a lot to be said in favor or against both models; but much depends on the quality of general education provided and on the opportunities for further training after initial general education. All European countries differ with respect to these elements and above all with respect to the different weight given to either vocational or general education. During the past 15 years, however, we can note in West European countries an increasing importance given to vocational qualifications, even in those countries that have traditionally put more stress on general education. At the same time, all countries have undertaken consider-

able reforms of their systems, both with the view to improve access to vocational streams and to improve their responsiveness to labor market demands.

(b) Another alternative choice - which is related to the above - refers to the **responsibility for, and the location of training**. Here, there are several different approaches:

- In the American and Japanese models, training is provided essentially by business firms and only to those who have found employment.

- In the French and the traditional South European systems, training is provided essentially in school before people enter the labor market.

- In the German tradition of the "dual system" (followed also by Austria, Denmark and Switzerland) the responsibility for training is shared between schools and business through a well integrated division of theoretical learning in schools and practical learning in enterprises.

- Other countries have mixtures of the above systems. The Netherlands, for example, has developed a combination of a school-based and an apprenticeship system. It has recently invested quite a lot in improving the quality and attractiveness of the apprenticeship system.

The merits and the drawbacks of the different systems may be discussed as follows:

- Maintaining pupils in general education as long as possible is supposed to offer them wider opportunities, which might be limited when there is an early orientation. On the other hand, it implies a longer duration of schools with cost implications. Furthermore, leaving the responsibility for training entirely to business firms is risky: are they able and willing to take this responsibility? Will this training be sufficiently broad-based and forward-looking, or will it be limited to the specific and short-term needs of the employer? Who has access to this type of training?

- On the other hand, school-based training is often criticized for being exceedingly academic and too far from the real needs of the economy: teachers usually do not have enough and up-to-date work experience and the adaptation of the curriculum to changing requirements takes a long time. Furthermore, the transition from school to the employment system is connected with many problems due to the relative isolation of both systems.

Compared with school-based training systems, the advantages of the dual system can be characterized as follows:

- The system, in spite of many deficiencies, is closer to the work process and allows for a faster application of new technical and economic demands in the training strategies and qualifications.

- Due to its proximity to the work process and its integrating function it offers many young people better motivation to learn as compared to the more remote school location.

- It makes a less problematic transition from the school to the employment system possible. The relatively low rates of youth unemployment in Germany during the labor market crisis of the 1970s and 1980s are an indication of this point.

- In large areas of the economy, predominantly in the crafts and in certain service industries where the enterprises are more likely small or medium-sized, the dual system remains an efficient mode of attaining qualified personnel.

In principle, the dual system would constitute the best compromise between a school-based and an enterprise-based system. But this is so only subject to a number of conditions: (a) that business firms consider their training responsibility as a long-term investment for themselves, and also for the nation as a whole (which is the case in Germany); (b) that the practical part of in-company training is following a well-defined program and is supported by well-trained tutors; and (c) that this practical part and the courses that are given in school are closely related to each other.

It is interesting to note that most countries to-day seem to be aware of the limitations of their systems and tend to adapt them accordingly. As a result, it may be argued that there is some convergence developing between them. To give a few examples: the United States, and to some extent Japan, are now undertaking to give a new impetus to technical and vocational education. France is developing various forms of cooperation between school and business, including work experience, as part of the curriculum of vocational schools, and a recent attempt has been made to revive apprenticeship. In Germany, a growing proportion of young people complete their secondary general school (Abitur) before starting apprenticeship. In addition, it may probably be said that theory teaching tends to take a larger place within the dual system itself, for instance through additional courses organized by some of the large firms. The

Netherlands have given more stress to the apprenticeship system but have simultaneously expanded the parallel line of school-based vocational education. It is also introducing Regional Training Centers in order to provide sites where practical training can be given according to the highest standards for the various types of vocational education.

At EC level, the European Commission, supported by the member States, has initiated over the past period several European-wide programs aiming at the dissemination of experiences from best practices. It has widely promoted the development of different forms of "alternance" learning, equal opportunities for access to vocational training measures (also between member states), programs to cope with problems in the transition from school to work, etc. Actual Community policy aims at guaranteeing 1-2 years of Vocational training to each young person before entering the labor market, and to provide recognized vocational qualifications.

4.2.2. The structure of vocational education and training in Poland

It is not a simple task to accurately describe the present VET system in Poland. While basically its structure has been inherited from the previous economic system, especially with respect to the types of schools and their relative weight in the system, other aspects have been changed or are being changed gradually. In general, though, such changes have taken place in a very *ad hoc* way. Most of them are connected with the overall responsibility for organization and financing of VET and are due to the fact that, as a result of economic reform measures, enterprises and some ministries have withdrawn from their previous responsibilities.

The second complicating factor is caused by the fact that upgrading and retraining of adults has traditionally been covered by state-run schools and by a number of large non-governmental training organizations. These training monopolies were financed by enterprises who made use of their services and are presently also facing problems.

Thirdly, the whole area of retraining of the unemployed, a major element in western VET systems, is now only being constructed. Responsibility for retraining measures lies with the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy which has to build up a whole new labor market infrastructure almost from scratch. Obviously, the first steps and major allotments went to develop protective systems for registration and payment of unemployment benefits. Retraining, like other active employment measures, remain of secondary importance. To illustrate the problems at stake it suffices to mention that only 1% of the unemployed had

followed in 1990 any kind of retraining course. Less than 0,5% of the Labor Fund has been used for retraining measures in 1990 and no more than 0,6% was used accordingly from that source in 1991. The issue of retraining of the unemployed will be dealt with in more detail in a later section.

Thus, the Polish VET system anno 1992 is partly inherited from the old system, partly changing in response to crisis management, and partly still being constructed. In the following, the main features of this evolving system will be shortly described.

Primary school starts from the age of 7 and lasts 8 grades. Compulsory schooling lasts until the completion of the primary school, or up to the age of 17. After primary school youth can continue their education in a) general secondary schools, or b) various types of vocational schools.

The structure of the present Vocational Education System dates back to the 1961 Act on the Development of the Educational System. Polish Parliament has accepted in September 1991 a new Law on Secondary Education. The specific measures for vocational education still have to be worked out and will not come into effect before the beginning of the next school year.

All schools, except the Basic Vocational Schools require entrance examinations. This has provided for an effective control over numbers entering secondary schools. It also has provided the Basic Vocational Schools with the stigma of educating those who failed to enter other types of schools. This characteristic is reinforced by the traditional pedagogical approach focussing on university preparation which characterizes secondary schools, and inevitably primary schools as well.

There have not been any significant changes in the schooling pattern over the last decades, although there has been a slight tendency to reduce numbers of students entering Basic Vocational Schools and to increase the numbers entering Secondary Technical Schools. Between 96 and 97% of primary-school leavers used to continue full-time education. In 1991-92, the proportion dropped to 94%, of whom about

- 26% entered secondary general schools (20% in 1985-86)
- 25% started at secondarytechnical schools and vocational lyceums (23,5% in 1985-86)

- and about 43% attended basic vocational schools (54% in 1985-86) (CSO 1992).

However, this does not mean that all those that enter post primary education successfully complete their studies. As a matter of fact, drop out rates are fairly high, especially in basic vocational education.

All in all, therefore, about 70% of each cohort enters the Vocational Education System! Some 50% start at secondary schools (general or vocational) that lead to a diploma allowing to sit for higher education entrance examinations. Graduates of vocational schools that do not offer this possibility (now more than 40% of all primary-school leavers !) can - in principle - continue their studies to achieve full secondary level certificates. The number of those who actually do so, however, is low and amounts to 23% of daily secondary professional schools which run 2-4 years courses (1990-91).

As a result, almost 50% of schoolleavers entering the labor market in 1989-90 had at most a basic vocational school diploma (or else incomplete secondary schooling), while 13% could claim only elementary school certificate (or else were drop-outs from basic vocational schools) (Bednarska). CSO labor statistics show that the proportion of basic vocational school diploma holders among all post-elementary school leavers entering the labor market, stood at 50-53% from 1985-89.

During the school year 1990-91 all types of vocational schools for young people enrolled 1.538.000 pupils, and the schools for adults, 247.000. In the same year, about 56.000 students graduated from universities. One can indeed say, that the great mass of Polish people is traditionally channeled to enter the working class.

The vocational schools are organized along the principle of sectors and branches (with the respective technical ministry or other central administration responsible for elaborating the vocational curricula). Schools are "mono-sectorial" and it is difficult to switch from one type of vocation to another. These characteristics make the system excessively rigid.

In all types of vocational schools part of the education takes place outside the schools. Even schools that possess their own practice workshops organize a part of the education in enterprises. There are obligatory practice periods that are organized during the school year or even during the holidays. Though ideologically praised, practice work has always been rather governed by economic interests of the school and the enterprise, and not so much by pedagogical principles. Factory managers are known to have been rather hostile

towards the "nuisance" of having to take care of trainees. Most of the practice workshops (either in schools or in factories) have been organized around simple manual production activities and the operation of particular machines. There is very often little or no relationship between the theory taught in schools and the practical work done in enterprise workshops. It has become generally understood that practice work has been neither well integrated in the teaching programs of schools, nor in the work practice of enterprises.

Recently, most enterprise-based schools or workshops have been closed down and an increasing number of schools managed by Kuratoria have run into problems with respect to the financing of their practice workshops. These workshops were run on a commercial basis, and had to make an operational profit through the selling of products. Until recently, most schools succeeded through sales of their own production and services, with only the teachers salaries being paid from the state budget. As the economic recession deepened and the market opened for foreign products of better quality, the demand for such products decreased compounded by the fact that existing legislation makes subsidizing of school workshops impossible. Modifications of the law are in preparation but they might well come too late for most schools. Cases have already been registered of school workshops going bankrupt, which means that vocational training is running the risk of becoming purely theoretical in nature.

4.2.3. Discussions about a reform of the system

As has been mentioned, the structure of the Polish educational system has long been the subject of discussions. Many reform proposals have been made but the system shows over the past 25 years a remarkable stability. Recently, new initiatives for a reform of the structures have been taken. In September 1990, the Minister of National Education has asked a special Working Group to prepare proposals for a reform of the Vocational Education system. This Working Group, basically composed of teachers and directors of vocational schools, has presented a general proposal at the end of November 1990 as a basis for further detailed elaboration (Working Group of Ministry of National Education 1991; Nowa Szkola nr. 9 1991). The report only deals with the school-based system. An earlier report on "The State and Directions of National Education" published at the end of 1989, which was the result of three years of work by a Committee of Experts established by the pre-Solidarnosc government, was not accepted by the new authorities (Kaczor 1989; KEEN 1989). However, some of the criticisms contained in the Expert Committee's report were taken over by the Working Group. It is worth repeating them here since they are the object of a much longer discussion:

- The most problematic feature of the present VET system is generally seen to be the too dominating role of the **Basic Vocational Schools**. They attract about 50% of primary school-leavers, educate for a high number of quite narrow occupational profiles, give relatively little general education, and are, in fact, the poorest educational institution in terms of equipment, teaching materials, and quality of teachers. Their general social status is low and most of the students and their parents consider this school type as the result of a negative selection. Drop-out rates, accordingly, are high. The Working Group proposes to reduce the number of youth attending this school type and to radically improve the level of teaching. On the other hand, however, and this fact is not mentioned by the Working Group, many industrial enterprises still favor these schools since they provide them with the large numbers of semi-skilled workers that they need for their production processes.

- The **Secondary Technical School**, educating for technician qualifications, is generally been criticized as lasting too long, not being adapted to the labor market and offering too narrow profiles. The negative aspects are even more severe for the variant of this school which is open for graduates of the Basic Vocational Schools. The Working Group radically proposes to eliminate this school type. If this were to happen, however, graduates from Basic Vocational Schools would loose one of the few chances for obtaining a higher qualification.

- The 4-year **Secondary Vocational School**, which offers a professional qualification and at the same time a diploma of secondary general education is regarded as not having found sufficient social acceptance. Only 4% of primary school-leavers entered this school type in 1989. Youth who deliberately choose for a worker's occupation prefer to go to the shorter Basic Vocational School. While those who want to achieve secondary level education, but failed to enter secondary general school, prefer to go to Secondary Technical Schools which at least offer them the qualification of a technician. Moreover, graduates from these schools are usually not interested in a worker's career but they also tend to be less successful during entrance examinations for higher education (in 1990, 16% of Secondary Vocational School graduates entered university; 54% of Secondary General School graduates did so).

- The vocational courses that can be followed after secondary general school in **Post-matriculate schools** (lasting 1 year for skilled worker qualifications, and 2-3 years for technicians or teachers) are, due to their short duration, able to adapt relatively quickly to changes in the demand structure. However, for

most of the students this type of schooling is a kind of waiting-room for entrance to the university and therefore a negative selection. Most of the students, in fact, are those that have failed university entrance examinations, repeatedly go for new examinations and would leave as soon as they have passed one successfully.

In view of the new demands put to VET by the development of a market economy system, a modern VET system should, according to the Working Group, secure **flexibility** and **mobility**; provide **professional skills** at a level that is asked for on the labor market; improve the relationship between **theory and practice** to the advantage of practical skills; and link professional skills to practical and theoretical knowledge necessary for independent work in **small private enterprises**. We shall return to some of these points in later parts of this report. Here we shall look especially at the discussion about a new structure.

The two alternative models proposed by the Working Group deliberately do not present a radical break with the existing system but rather suggest adaptations of it. Both models assume that pupils start at the age of 6 at elementary school.

Model number 1 builds on the 8-class elementary school and foresees in the establishment of two types of secondary schools: (1) secondary general schools (or lycea), and (2) secondary vocational schools. These schools would last 4 years. The first year of teaching would be similar in both types in order to make an eventual passage from one type of school to the other possible. A majority of elementary school-leavers would enter secondary schools of these types.

Those who wish to learn an occupation immediately after leaving elementary school would go to so called (3) "Basic Vocational Schools". These would last 3 - and for some occupations only 2 - years. After the first year of Secondary Vocational School decisions will have to be taken (on the basis of study results) whether students can remain or would have to go to Basic Vocational Schools. Students who finish Basic Vocational School before their 18th birthday will follow specialization courses or adaptation-to-the-job which they are to occupy. Such introduction of practical specialization after finishing school could lead to increase the share of general subjects during school learning. It could also allow to pass a new examination for the title of "independent craftsman", whereas the school diploma qualifies for "skilled worker". Basic Vocational School leavers will also have the possibility to pass to Secondary Vocational Schools which then will last only 3 years.

Secondary Vocational Schools will last 4 years and are to be divided in technical and non-technical schools. They provide education for a skilled-worker's qualification equal to that of technical occupations in the Basic Vocational School, plus a secondary general education certificate. This last certificate enables to sit for entrance examinations for higher education. A qualification of "technician" can be acquired, both for technical and non-technical school-leavers, through Post-Lyceum technical studies that would last 2 to 2,5 years.

Model number 2 proposes to reduce elementary school to 7 classes followed by the introduction of a general obligatory gymnasium of 2 years. The system of vocational education schools would be similar to those under model 1. The different schools would only last one year less. The post-primary gymnasium proposed in this model existed in Poland until shortly after World War II. Its aim would be to complete general education and to provide for elementary vocational education. It would allow students more time before having to make occupational decisions. Moreover, as a result of its shorter duration, it would allow vocational education to be more flexible and easier to adapt to changing conditions.

Both models also foresee the maintenance of a system of part-time (or extra-mural) vocational education for those youth and adults who have not undergone vocational education inside the school system. This system could be organized in an even more flexible way, depending on the specific character of occupations and the capacities of the students involved.

In the discussions held following the publication of the report a general preference was shown for the second model proposed. However, and mainly due to acute financial problems, no follow-up to this discussion has taken place as yet. Thus, for the third time in sequence during almost 20 years, an attempt at changing the structure of the educational system which has been operating since the 1950s has encountered serious obstacles for its practical implementation. Such repetitive experience cannot be overlooked when drafting a feasible plan of action at the end of this report. It has to be recognized, however, that a gradual reduction of the number of Basic Vocational Schools and of students attending this type has been realized over the past two years at the favor of secondary schools.

4.2.4. Comparative remarks

The Polish educational system urgently needs a re-balancing of its streams and more in particular a decrease of the high number of pupils channeled towards Basic Vocational Schools. This issue has been discussed since long and steps

have been taken to increase the number of students going to secondary general schools. It can be discussed though, whether this problem can be solved by simply closing down Basic Vocational Schools and providing more places at Secondary schools. This is only so when the main cause was a shortage of places in secondary schools. While to a certain extent this has been the case, however, it has been suggested that high numbers of pupils in Basic Vocational Schools were also the result of the nature and the quality of general education, both at primary and secondary level. If this is the case, the Basic Vocational Schools run the risk of truly becoming a "dustbin" for those who do not succeed in the general streams. Under such conditions it is even more important to improve the quality of vocational schools. However, this cannot be done without improving the quality, and changing the nature, of general education at primary and secondary schools as well. Unfortunately, no practical measures were undertaken to merge the conceptual part of the studies pursued by the Ministry of National Education on modernization of general education with those targeted on the VET system (Nowa Szkola nr. 8 1991).

In this context one should also point at the structural rigidities that are built into the system of vocational schools by organizing them along sectorial principles. Rigidity is even intensified by the fact that each specific type of school (basic vocational, secondary, or post-matriculate) only educates for specific occupations. Here, it seems particularly necessary to transform the mono-sectorial schools into multi-sectorial schools, and to increase internal educational mobility (which would also improve responsiveness to the local and/or regional employment structure, in view of the contribution that vocational schools could make for the development of employment).

From the above description it is clear that Poland has already an experience of involving industry in the training process. However, that has been under quite different economic conditions. It is now faced with the economic crisis affecting some of the most active firms, which are giving up their training responsibilities for lack of resources. At the same time, Polish firms cannot offer the type of experience corresponding to some of the skills required by a market economy (management, trade). For the time being, this would mean that many schools are forced to fill the gap between theory and practice themselves. However, the existing conception behind practice workshops would have to be fundamentally changed: instead of providing experience with practical work (usually of a rather low level) they should be changed into workshops, or training centers for **practical learning**. The connection between theory and practice would have to be improved accordingly.

This is an opportunity to make a distinction between long-term perspectives and short-term measures corresponding to the transition period. In the long-term perspective, it might be appropriate to maintain - or rather revive - the principle of a cooperation between schools and industry, within some kind of dual system. But, as it is impossible to wait until the proper conditions to implement this principle are fulfilled, the possibility of setting up practical-learning workshops inside or closely connected to the schools might be contemplated. Such workshops could be shared by different schools and different firms and could also be used for further training and retraining of adults. Recent experiences in some western countries such as the Netherlands with the setting-up of Regional Training Centers may serve as an example to be studied in detail. The implications in terms of teachers and facilities will be discussed below.

4.3. Contents and curricula

The following issues will be discussed here: (a) the identification of the main social categories produced by the vocational education system; (b) the main streams and areas of training; (c) the degree of specialization and (d) the type of skills to be taught.

4.3.1. The international experience

(a) The discussion of contents and curricula should be seen against the background of the type of objectives assigned to vocational education and training, and to national systems of credentials. Vocational education usually aims at two categories of workers and employees:

- Skilled workers, i.e. workers (and employees) requiring a substantial training, including some theory as well as practical know-how; it can be acquired in a variety of ways, but normally lasts for more than a year. (Semi-skilled or unskilled workers receive only a short training, usually on-the-job).

- Technicians who require more theory and general education; they are usually trained in school, after the completion of a secondary school (but they may also acquire their qualification through promotion on the basis of their employment).

There are wide differences between countries with regard to the relationship between these educational qualifications and their recognition on the labor market, especially from the view of classification and wages. In Germany, the latter refer to the completion of an apprenticeship for a specific occupation, notwithstanding the initial level of education. The completion of this apprentice-

ship is automatically recognized by firms (who have themselves been involved in the training process) as long as there is a correspondence between the type of job and the type of training. Skilled workers have a clear social identity and their wages are substantially higher than those of unskilled workers, which is a strong incentive to get the proper qualifications.

In other countries, such as France, socially recognized qualifications refer to the number of years of schooling and the level of education (general or vocational) rather than to the type of training. Obsession with levels is sometimes criticized for contributing to the rigidity of the labor market, to the high level of unemployment and to an inflation of diplomas. The level does not guarantee that the proper skills have been acquired. Although there exist collective agreements defining skill levels, business firms do not necessarily recognize, for the classification of workers, the value of school training that they have received. Characteristics of the work place and years of employment (seniority) are decisive for classification.

There are also countries, such as Spain, where such systems do not exist at all: qualifications and classifications are then left to the decision of business firms, leaving no guarantees to the workers that their formal qualifications are rewarded. In this case it may happen that university graduates are employed as skilled workers.

Against the background of this variety of qualification systems and in view of the establishment of the Internal Market in 1993, the European Communities have undertaken several attempts to achieve higher transparency with respect to the different national qualifications and qualification standards. This work is confronted with many methodological and practical problems. The experiences made so far may be very useful for the further development of the Polish system.

(b) In view of the **high degree of uncertainty** prevailing with regard to future needs, how is it possible to define the different streams and the distribution of students between them? Here, we would like to suggest two types of distinctions:

- First of all, it should be possible to distinguish permanent and universal skills needed by any kind of economy and those more specific ones which correspond to a particular stage of development and to a specific orientation towards some industries. Many skills, such as management, accounting, secretarial and commerce, as well as maintenance correspond to the first category. Most craft skills belong to the second group.

- Another distinction may be established between those skills requiring some degree of theory teaching and a rather long period (of at least a minimum of one year) and other skills which can be taught largely on-the-job and in a shorter period of time. To give some examples (but further discussion would be required): skilled occupations in metalworking, electricity, accounting would belong to the first group. On the other hand, most traditional occupations in the textile, leather, woodwork industries and in retailing are semi-skilled and could rather be classified under the second category. The same could be said of traditional crafts in small firms.

(c) The next step would be to determine the **degree of specialization**. The traditional approach is to prepare for specific occupations. This was appropriate as long as workers were staying for a long period in the same occupation and for small firms which could not afford to provide additional training and wanted to recruit people who could be readily employed. But specialized training is more expensive (it implies a large number of courses with less students). It increases the difficulty of matching supply and demand on the labor market. Furthermore, with the recent trend towards more mobility of workers and constantly changing work contents, a high degree of specialization does not fit the needs of most workers and employers.

The alternative is to promote **broad-based training** without aiming at a specific occupation. But there are also limitations to this approach: further training is required before assigning a job to the trainees; there is a risk that training remains too general and does not include enough work experience.

Compromise solutions have been experimented in order to avoid these drawbacks. One of them is based on the concept of **transferability**. Curricula and teaching methods are conceived with a view to prepare the trainees for concrete work situations, but to give them an understanding of different, but related jobs, so that their adaptation becomes easier.

Another solution is **progressive specialization**. In the German dual system for instance, the number of training streams has been recently reduced. But, in addition, for metalworking training for instance, specialization is achieved by steps: during the first year, all pupils follow the same courses which include general subjects and basic technology; during the second year, there is a beginning of specialization which continues into the third year.

Finally, some countries, such as the Netherlands, Denmark, and Scotland, are experimenting with a modularized structure of training. Here, theoretical and practical aspects of distinct topics are put together in modules of teaching. A full

educational training program will consist of a definite set of modules but the accomplishment of each module will be recognized. The module system has the advantage of flexibilizing the time needed for the training. It also allows to use the same modules for different vocational profiles. It has the disadvantage that it may lead employers and students alike to aim at the minimum numbers of modules necessary for a specific job, and as a result may lead to the breakdown of accepted occupational profiles.

(d) The trend away from specialization and the uncertainty about economic needs should not mean a neglect of the work conditions and requirements. Actually, in several countries to-day, training objectives tend to be defined in terms, not of the knowledge to be acquired, but of the **ability to perform a function or a set of tasks**, i.e. competence-based in relation to the world of work. In France, national diplomas set up by the Ministry of education are now conceived in this way, which is a major change. But they are still defined in rather broad terms, with an emphasis on a global understanding of the work situation.

In the United Kingdom, where there traditionally has not been a national system of standards and of examinations, it was felt that the development of further training could be enhanced by the setting up of a general framework based on the same principles. A new system of "National Vocational Qualifications" (or N.V.Q.) has since been developed based on the specific english situation. Qualifications are defined at the sectorial level by bodies in which industry plays a major role. The emphasis is put on concrete achievements, stated in a rather detailed way. The evaluation takes into account, not only the academic performances, but also the work experience. Management in industry can contribute to evaluation, just as much as teachers. This ambitious program is widely discussed and is criticized from educational quarters for remaining too much at the ground level, without enough emphasis on the intellectual development of trainees.

This debate is somewhat parallel to the one going on in France, where the business community is often critical of vocational education, which is still considered as exceedingly academic. In the Netherlands, decentralization of decision-making concerning contents and provision takes place with the concomitant establishment of a national framework of qualification standards.

(e) The last major problem concerns **the type of skills** to be emphasized. It is generally accepted that training is supposed to deal with three dimensions: knowledge, know-how and attitudes. Traditional training was giving much emphasis to know-how. With regard to attitudes, the important thing was to follow the rules and instructions set out by management.

The changing economic requirements outlined above imply sweeping changes in this respect:

- With the widespread use of new information technologies, priority is now being given to basic knowledge of a higher level rather than to know-how, as current operations are largely performed by machines.

- This trend is even more pronounced with the development of tertiary jobs, which in many cases require more broad knowledge than know-how. In addition, part of the knowledge and know-how is firm-specific and can be taught only by the actual employer.

- As mentioned earlier, there is now a growing emphasis on behavioral skills, such as the ability to learn, to express oneself in oral or written form, to develop a human relationship, to analyze problems, to adapt to a variety of unexpected situations, to develop an independent judgment, to be more innovative. This type of skills are not at all the ones that schools and training institutions used to promote: trainees used to learn to do what they were told in a rather passive way. This change in emphasis has far-reaching implications, as it is the culture of the whole system and the tradition of the teaching staff which are being questioned.

4.3.2. The Polish situation

The principal objectives of vocational education in Poland are radically changing. From the production of clearly defined fixed numbers of people for specific - more or less guaranteed - occupations, the system is now to produce for an open labor market, without employment guarantee and without clear knowledge about quantities and qualities of specific occupations. Vocational education has become itself a factor in the development of employment. However, to a large extent, the existing institutions continue to produce for the traditional objectives high numbers of skilled workers and technicians in defined occupations.

According to the present system a **skilled worker** can get his qualification by finalizing after primary school:

- a 3-year basic vocational school;

- a 4-year secondary vocational lyceum; or
- a 1-year post-secondary vocational study to be followed after finishing secondary general school.

- a 3-year apprenticeship in a craft firm;

A **technician** gets his qualification after

- a technical secondary school, which can be
  . 4 or 6 years long (depending on the profession), entered after the primary school, or
  . 2,5 to 3 years long, if entered after the 3-years basic vocational school, or

- a 2 to 3 year vocational study after passing the 4-year secondary general school.

- a new 3 year lasting college for teachers (including language teachers), now belonging to post-matriculate (secondary upper) level and considered to become the model for short-cycle tertiary level vocational schools, offering a diploma of higher education in a relevant profession.

Each school type caters for a specific set of occupations and some occupations can only be reached through one type of school.

The most widespread way of getting a qualification of a skilled worker are the 3-year Basic Vocational Schools, and for a technician, the Secondary Technical School. Employed adults mostly go to the Secondary Technical Schools. Most of them have finished in their youth a 3-year Basic Vocational School.

It should be mentioned that vocational education was being given for a high number of - consequently narrow -occupational profiles: 240 for skilled workers and 300 for technicians. Work is going on for some time to broaden the profiles and to reduce their number, there should be "only" 151 skilled workers profiles and 91 for technicians. The high number of skilled worker and technician occupations not only indicates the prevalence of extremely narrow training profiles but also a high division of labor in enterprises.

One note of caution refers to the use of such words as "skilled worker" and "technician" and the equivalence of these words with categories used in western countries. Given the existence of narrow profiles there are reasons to assume that the categories are rather *not* comparable. However, detailed comparative research needs to be undertaken on this issue. Such studies on the equivalence of qualifications between Poland and other countries have already been undertaken for the tertiary sector (Jablonska-Skinder, Teichler and LatzendÖrfer 1989). For vocational education comparisons only exist for Germany (BIBB 1991).

4.3.3. Comparative remarks

The Polish vocational education system continues to produce high numbers of skilled workers and technicians for executive jobs in traditional sectors of industry. It is still very weak in "producing" other social categories needed in a market oriented economy: entrepreneurs and skilled employees for the new service sectors. All kinds of commercial occupations are very much underdeveloped. (Though it should be stressed that individual schools are working hard to respond to new labor market demands). Even though it is not clear which sectors will exactly be in need of qualified workers, there is at least some idea with respect to sectors and occupations that earlier did not exist at all, such as all kind of market oriented service occupations. There might also be some degree of certainty about the future decline of other sectors following the results of studies recently undertaken on the recovery chances of firms and branches in Poland. The potential involvement of vocational education and retraining in any of these sectors will have to be quite differentiated.

One could use a simple typology of 4 different employment areas, based on expected economic performance, to illustrate the above point.

Area I employed at the end of the 1980s 18% of the work force and is characterized by a definite decline (mining, metallurgy, chemical and other heavy industries). These industries are environmentally dangerous, wasting energy and have bleak prospects of trading final products both inside Poland and abroad. These are predominantly large-scale state-run enterprises, concentrated in specific geographical areas and employing large numbers of blue collar workers.

Once the favorite area of cooperation between the state financed vocational schools and the enterprises, it is now openly deserted by the latter and shunned away from by the former.

Area II (49%, light manufacturing, construction, agriculture but mainly small private farmers) has tangible development prospects, but was long blocked due to local fiscal policies and protectionist trading policies abroad. It has also lost the East European markets. This area is characterized by a mix of medium and small sized enterprises employing the whole range from workers to craftsmen, independent entrepreneurs and farmers. Various recovery plans are now being developed for this sector, especially in farming and construction, including the creation of special zones of industrial (Lodz textile region) or commercial activities (Eastern territories in Poland with Ukraina and Byelorussia).

For the time being, responsibility for training for these sectors is given to local and regional authorities and consequently they run the risk to loose the competition against day-to-day crisis spending.

Area III (18%) is the field of new economic activities (trade and commerce, banking, tourism, transport, personal services etc.). These sectors have relatively good prospects depending on the income development of the population. This is where at present the new middle class is developing.

These sectors momentarily are able to satisfy their educational needs by buying out skilled people from less prosperous areas with low salaries. The sectors are also characterized by the mushrooming of all kinds of informal course-based private training institutions, and by the - often - uncoordinated support from foreign assistance programs. This area urgently needs to be constructed (see also section 2.4.).

Area IV (15%) covers the public services and is the typical white collar sector. Highest qualified and least secure in terms of incomes, dependent as they are on the state of the Governments budget

This is the sector which relies almost completely on existing upper secondary and tertiary public education facilities. This is also the sector earmarked in the 1992 state budget for cuts in expenditures (health, education) and strongly exposed to job transfers towards private business and emigration. No doubt, here there is ample need and room for upgrading of qualifications (especially in social sciences and some streams of technical sciences). Essentially, however, the main problem for this area is the creation of a requisite working environment so that professionals will be able to put their qualifications at the disposal of society.

In view of the uncertainty concerning the future of the Polish economy, it does not seem appropriate at this stage to develop a training system preparing for an early specialization into a high number of specific occupations. The present system of early specialization does not seem functional in this context and is likely to be far too costly. As mentioned, discussions are taking place to further reduce the number of training occupations. Polish experts may refer here to the different West European experiences and approaches. In the light of the above analysis, however, it may be questioned if this is a sufficient approach.

The most convenient approach might be inspired by the German example, i.e. the definition of a small number of basic training areas, with some degree of specialization taking place as late as possible and eventually dependent on local

and regional labor market situations. Practical learning in workshops would avoid the risk of such training remaining too general. Alternatively, the experiments with modularization may be further considered. However, it should be noted that the respective countries have invested during many years huge sums and many other resources in developing modularized systems.

What has been said so far, generally refers to what one could call "technical skills". While such skills are undergoing considerable changes leading to the need to broaden occupational training profiles, new types of attitudinal and behavioral skills are developing which ask for other types of reactions, both in terms of contents and in methods of teaching. These new types of skills appear to be seriously underestimated, or not yet recognized, in the Polish discussions. Changing to a new culture of learning and working is probably one of the most difficult challenges facing a reform of the training system. Especially since it will be difficult to find teacher trainers who could transmit the new culture, which can hardly be imported from abroad.

4.4. Monitoring the system

Training systems cannot be managed on a day-to-day basis and their operation left only to market forces. They require some kind of monitoring and this raises three major issues: (a) the administrative set up, (b) the consultative process and (c) the provision of research and evaluation.

4.4.1. The international experience

(a) The administrative set up is an area where historical and cultural contexts account for the large variety of solutions to be found in Western industrialized countries.

There is a traditional distinction between the centralized systems (of which the main example was France) and the decentralized ones (of which the most extreme is probably the United Kingdom). Germany may be seen as a somewhat intermediate situation, whereby the authority for the part of training given in school is left with the Länder, while the part provided by business firms is planned and coordinated by a Federal Agency.

However, the distinction tends to become somewhat blurred, as France has initiated a process of decentralization, which is already fairly advanced in Italy and Spain. At the same time, the United Kingdom is still experimenting, after a period of re-centralization leading to the creation of the Manpower Services Commission, then of the Training Agency, which have now been closed down,

in favor of local Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs). The Netherlands, as mentioned earlier, are radically decentralizing but within a national framework of recognized standards and certificates.

(b) Whatever the system adopted, there is always a need for coordination of the various segments of the whole system: coordination between secondary general and higher education and vocational training, coordination between the various types of training, which may be placed under the authority of different agencies. All these segments can be complementary or can be substituted for each other and therefore cannot be operated in isolation.

The planning of vocational training, as it may be conceived to-day, is neither a technical nor an administrative operation. It should be a process of a permanent character, taking place at different levels and concerning a variety of actors. In this process, the implementation is just as important as the definition of objectives.

According to this concept, involving the **social partners** (including employers, trade unions and teachers) is very essential, as nothing can be achieved without some degree of consultation, even though a complete consensus may be difficult to achieve, given the sometimes conflicting interests of the parties.

Regional and local authorities have a number of reasons to be concerned about training (apart from the fact that central administration is progressively shifting educational responsibilities downstream): it is a pre-requisite for economic development and job creation, it is a source of expenditure, it often meets a social demand. Employers should obviously play an essential role in the definition of training objectives. They may also contribute directly to the training process. They should also participate in the evaluation, at least in the final examination. Workers - through their representatives - have also a say, if only to make sure that training is broad enough to give them a chance for further development and promotion.

But this is not all. It should also be reminded that the success of training programs depends heavily upon the understanding and support of the management of schools and training institutions, as well as of teachers and instructors. Without this support and understanding, the best conceived objectives can be distorted. Finally, nothing can be done without the motivation of trainees themselves.

It is therefore necessary that all these actors are at least properly informed, not only of the final decisions, but also of the alternatives and of the motives that justify those decisions. As far as possible, they should also be involved in a

consultative process taking place at different levels: national, regional and/or local, and school.

This is more or less achieved in different ways in Western European countries. Of the major countries, it is in Germany where the highest level of consultation has been realized. The list of occupations and of training streams and objectives require a consensus between representatives from employers, unions and the Federal Government, but extensive consultations take also place with the Länder. In France, the Ministry of Education has set up consultative commissions with representatives from employers, trade unions and teachers. They are consulted on training objectives, but the final decision remains the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. Schools increasingly develop informal contacts with employers, who are also participating in examinations. In Italy, where the authority for training is left with regional authorities, the latter develop their own machinery. Denmark has a very long tradition of social partnership. In the Netherlands, increasingly, tripartite councils at the regional and local level are involved in decision-making.

(c) This planning process, as well as the consultations that it requires, necessitates not only a certain amount of data, but also a variety of research and investigations on the present situation, the future prospects and the alternative lines of action and their implications. Four major areas for **information and research** can be identified: - the internal evaluation of the training system in terms of its efficiency; - the external evaluation concerning its effectiveness; - the future needs; and - the educational measures to be taken to satisfy those needs.

- The internal evaluation includes the collection and analysis of data on the number of students and teachers in the different types of training (which may be under the responsibility of different agencies), on flows of recruitment and graduates and on costs. If possible - but this is more difficult - it should attempt to assess the quality of training from the point of view of the skill attainment and its relevancy for job placement, employment promotion and economic rewards.

- The external evaluation concerns the situation of trainees after graduation and on the labor market: are they employed, in which type of job, is it relevant to the training received? These are most important elements for the monitoring of the training system and should be available for the main types of training on a more or less continuous basis, in order to assess their adaptation to the needs of the economy. Many countries undertake longitudinal school-leavers surveys in order to have access to a up-to-date flow of information.

- Future needs may be considered from a quantitative and a qualitative point of view. As a result of the difficulties mentioned above for the forecasting of future requirements, it seems appropriate to put more emphasis on the qualitative approach, i.e. what kind of skills and competencies are likely to be required. There is no standard methodology to achieve this and it is an additional reason to set up a constant relationship between training and business and to establish a group of experienced specialists to this effect.

- All these elements are necessary to define the training objectives, the different streams leading to diplomas, the contents and teaching methods.

There is a variety of ways to deal with these problems. They can be left to private institutions or universities. But there is a risk that they take only a partial view of the problem, that the quality of their research leaves to be desired and that the cost would be too high. These are probably the reasons, together with the fact that training has become defined as a national issue, why most European countries have established national institutes to bear this responsibility.

In Germany, a single agency, the Federal Institute for Vocational Training (BIBB) is in charge of the last two areas of research and is also involved in the analysis of the operation of the system. It shares the responsibility for the external evaluation of the system with the research body of the Federal Office for the Labor market (IAB). BIBB is placed under the authority of the three parties: employers, trade unions and Government Federal and Länder). It works closely together with other (academic and non-academic) research institutes.

In France, a public agency called CEREQ is - under the authority of both the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labor - essentially in charge of the assessment of training requirements and of the external evaluation of the educational system through a large-scale and permanent observatory of entry into the labor market. It also follows firms' policies and expenditure on continuing training. An interesting feature of the French system is that CEREQ is cooperating with a network of associated centers located in different regions, within university groups working in the same areas of research. A more controversial point is related to the division of responsibility between CEREQ (in charge of the identification of needs and objectives) and the departments of the Ministry of Education, which remain in charge of the definition of curricula and diplomas.

In Italy, a central agency also supervised by the three social partners (ISFOL) is in charge of research and studies for the regional authorities. Its area of competence is rather similar to that of CEREQ. There is now a lot of discussion going on in Spain about the need to set up a similar institution and the shape that

it should take. Other countries have developed different infrastructures but they all have in common that they pay substantial attention to vocational education and training issues, which goes far beyond the mere pedagogical dimensions of curricula and teaching methods.

4.4.2. The Polish situation

The administration of the Vocational Education and Training system in Poland is characterized by (a) a high level of centralization (b) a wide dispersion of responsibilities among a number of central authorities, (c) a complex division of power between central agencies and provincial Kuratoria, (d) the absence of any systematic involvement of the social partners, (d) a separation of the sub-systems of vocational education (initial, further and re-training), and (e) the almost complete absence of a monitoring research and evaluation infrastructure. **Each of these characteristics has to be evaluated negatively from the point of view of an effective and efficient functioning of the system.**

In the light of the legal situation established by the 1991 Law on Education, vocational schools can be divided into three types from the point of view of the manner in which they are managed:

1) Those which provide initial vocational education for young people are run and supervised by the provincial offices of the Ministry of National Education (Kuratoria). This however is not the case for arts schools, medical schools and agricultural schools which are respectively run by the Ministry of Culture and Arts, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Economy,

2) Factory schools, which are run by state-owned enterprises. The supervision here is in the hands of the Kuratoria except for schools mentioned under 3,

3) schools educating for special professions, subordinated to the respective technical ministry with only a small role played by the Kuratoria

In addition to the above, a number of young persons are trained by individual enterprises for semi-skilled jobs "on-the-job" in short courses lasting usually between a few months and one year. Such pupils enjoy the status of young workers.

Some pupils finally go through job training or courses leading to a certificate equivalent to that of a skilled worker, with the apprenticeship system supervised by the Polish Crafts Union.

Pedagogical supervision (i.e. the control over teaching programs, evaluating the work quality of individual teachers etc.) of schools mentioned under 1) is performed by the Kuratoria in consultation with the respective ministries. For schools under 2) by the Kuratoria and under 3) by teaching staff employed in the mentioned ministries with the appropriate Kuratorium participating.

A separate issue is that of curricula. The Ministry of National Education lays down the curricula for general education subjects in all types of schools. The same ministry decides which teaching plans are pursued, and more specifically how many hours are to be devoted to various types of subjects (e.g. general education, general professional and specialist professional). The procedure to set the curricula for vocational subjects is much more complex, however. The classification of professions make the respective technical ministries (Finance, Construction, Industry etc.)the responsible bodies for defining the curricula for individual professions and specializations. Program commissions which exist within each ministry draft and modify these curricula, though their decisions have to receive final approval of the Ministry of National Education. In a number of pilot experiments parts of the curricula are now being prepared by schools themselves, allowing a better fit with local labor market demands. Final approval still has to be obtained from the central administration.

Retraining of the unemployed is managed by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and there are hardly systematic forms of cooperation with the Ministry of National Education.

In general, the present administrative set-up concerning the distribution of competencies and responsibilities with respect to contents (curricula), financing and staffing between the various ministries, and between the central and local authorities and schools are quite confusing and unclear. The reform of public administration targeted for June 1992, the transformation of the system of local administration, and finally the results of the evaluation of the recent reform of general education may eventually lead to a more transparent legal environment for educational matters in Poland. In the absence of such a situation, our report only refers to the present state of affairs.

4.4.3. Comparative remarks

The issues discussed above are the very issues that would need greater attention but that are at the same time characterized by the absence of coherent conceptions on the side of policy makers. There would be a need for a much

more simple management structure at the central level, combined with a gradual shift in the involvement of technical ministries towards social partners. This should be paralleled with the development of similar consultation mechanisms at the regional and local level.

Under the present conditions of lack of funds and resources, it should be considered whether a more efficient use of available resources at the lower levels could be reached, by **developing local and regional VET systems**, in which all major actors would take part and all available resources would be accessible for each of the subsystems of vocational education.

First steps to decentralize administrative responsibilities have been taken, namely with respect to curricula contents and staff recruitment and promotion policies. However, at the local level, where only limited ways to cope with financial problems exists, the impression prevails that local educational authorities are more quickly provided with responsibilities than with the resources to execute them in practice. The problem of **educational management** under the new conditions is becoming recognized. As mentioned, no systematic involvement of social partners is taking place as yet, one of the reasons, of course, being that employers and trade unions are still facing organizational problems themselves, especially at the national level. The representatives of the new business strata are yet in the phase of formation, while the trade union movement remains politically divided and concentrates on traditional union issues, such as wages and employment..

The establishment of a **research structure** seems to be particularly important in Poland to-day, when so much has to be done to define and organize a new system. This does not necessarily mean a very large institution employing many people. It means essentially: a central place for the collection of data provided by different agencies and training institutions; a kind of permanent secretariat to assist the more political coordinating bodies in providing them with the technical elements and with the analysis of the implications of alternative policies; the possible center of a research network, which would preferably include (at least some of the) universities and research institutions concerned with employment, education and pedagogics.

4.5. Resources

Three points will be considered under this item:
a) finance,
b) teaching staff and
c) facilities.

4.5.1. The international experience

(a) In theory, the financing of vocational education and training could be borne by either of the three parties concerned: Government, business and the trainees. Arguments may be found to support each of these solutions, as it is now generally agreed that training is a profitable investment:

- for business firms, since raising the skill level of their work force is a prerequisite to adjust to the new competitive context described above; it also increases the firms' efficiency and therefore their profitability;

- for workers, training broadens their employment opportunities and gives them a better chance of being promoted;

- and indirectly for the nation as a whole, for the same reasons.

Actual policies and practices, however, are closely related to national traditions and to institutional contexts. They also differ between initial training and further training of adult workers.

In the French tradition of a dominant role being played by the State, initial training is in most cases provided free of charge by State vocational schools. It is also a State initiative which (through a Law passed in 1971) undertook to develop further training of workers by imposing a levy on wages paid by all firms employing more than 10 workers. This system has undoubtedly contributed to a substantial increase in the expenditure allocated for such training. There are however some limitations to this approach:

- the fact that expenditure for training is a State obligation may be interpreted in a negative way, against the image of training as an investment;

- there are substantial imbalances in the provision of training: between occupational groups (management and supervisory personnel get a larger share) and between large and smaller firms which often lack the motivation, the time and the ability to train their personnel.

While attempting to correct those imbalances, recent negotiations between employers and unions are also envisaging the possibility that workers might contribute to the cost, by accepting to receive at least part of the training outside the work-time.

In countries such as Japan and the United States, a distinction should be made between practical training provided in-company, which is financed by business, and upper technical training provided in schools and universities. In the latter cases, the cost is shared between regional or local authorities and tuition fees, which are often very high. This means that a substantial part of the cost is borne by students and their families, which sometimes represents a heavy burden. There are however rather large opportunities for scholarships, at least in the US.

A system of **mixed financing** is closely related to the dual system as developed in Germany. Employers have been strongly opposed to any State intervention, as they insist on keeping the full responsibility - but also their entire freedom - with regard to the practical organization of training. This means that the part of training taking place within industry is entirely financed by business, including payments for apprentices. As for the part taking place in school, it is financed by the Länder.

There has been a long debate about the merits and drawbacks of this form of financing. The main advantage is that vocational training is regarded as investment in human resources and is included in the responsibilities of the firms. Disadvantages are also recognized, however: The quantity and quality of the training places depend largely on the economic strength of the specific firms. This can result in an unequal supply of training places between different regions. Moreover, access to specific training programs is controlled by the firms. Training costs are unequally distributed between the different enterprises (in the case of Germany only one fifth of the firms offer training places) Industriegewerkschaft Metall fÜr die Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1983).

(b) Vocational training requires different types of **teaching staff**: for general subjects, for the theory and for the practice of vocational subjects.

In Germany, there is a clear distinction between school teachers, civil servants employed by the Länder, who are in charge of the first two, and tutors, skilled workers (Meister) employed by business firms who are responsible for the practical aspects of training. In France, as most of the training is given in State vocational schools, teachers and instructors in those schools are Government officials employed on a life-long basis. One of the implications is a difficulty to re-deploy the teaching staff in accordance with the changing demands of the economy. In post-secondary technical institutes however, a number of engineers and managers from private enterprises are teaching on a part-time or occasional basis, together with full-time civil servants.

It is being recognized that the traditional profile of the teacher occupation will undergo considerable changes following the changes that are taking place in vocational education and training as such. This, in turn, will have tremendous implications for the education and training of teachers, as well as for their recruitment and employment.

From being a specialized expert, able to transmit his knowledge or know-how to the student the role of the future teacher will become much more complex as a provider of genuine learning opportunities. For this, he not only has to be an expert in a certain field, he will also have to be able to analyze diverse training needs and to design individual training routes, to master various pedagogical methods and means, transform working situations into learning situations, to integrate theory, training and problem solving for matters that most often will be defined by others, to articulate knowledge and external information sources, to rely on the input of other resource persons, and finally, to be able to translate these new requirements into activities for his own continuous further learning. Awareness about such developments is growing but the institutional frameworks for initial and further education of teachers are, naturally, only slowly adapting.

(c) **Buildings and equipment**, which are often the primary concern of authorities in charge of planning, are probably a less difficult problem. Two principles have to be borne in mind here:

- With the rapid changes in technology, it is now extremely expensive and practically impossible for vocational schools to keep abreast of the recent developments with an up-to-date equipment, in the real conditions of production. There are two answers to this problem (which should be combined as far as possible): one is to make arrangements with industry, either to use obsolete equipment for some aspects of training, or to organize training sessions or demonstrations. The other one is to make use of demonstration equipment which simulates the real industrial processes at a much lower cost. In general, there is a growing tendency to make the most efficient use of common facilities by various education and training institutions.

- The other principle is to aim at the optimal utilization of all possible buildings. They are not necessarily buildings initially conceived for training purposes. In any case, their utilization should not be limited for a particular class, or course, or period of time. For instance, it has become recognized that the same buildings and equipment used during day courses for initial training can serve also for courses organized in the evening or during the week-end for adult workers.

4.5.2. The situation in Poland

A rather complex system exists to finance vocational education. All state-run schools in Poland for youth and adults have always been and are still nominally free of charge. The private schools which have been emerging since 1989 are fee-paying but these are mostly primary and secondary general schools and quantitatively hardly of importance. However, suggestions have been made recently to charge tuition fees from extra-mural and unsuccessful intra-mural students of higher education and to change the existing grant system into a loan system in the case of universities.

With the exception of the instructors for practical on-the-job training, the **salaries of all teachers** are paid by the state budget (from the budget of the Ministry of National Education). Similarly, the expenses of all schools run by Kuratoria and ministries are covered by the national budget. This is different in the cases of factory schools which, with the exception of teachers' salaries, are not financed by the State. School maintenance expenses can be deducted from taxes that firms have to pay. The involved enterprises also have their corporate tax reduced by a sum equal to 25% of the product of the number of pupils and the mean cost involved in the financing of one pupil in the factory school. The proportion of students entering factory schools fell in 1990-91 to 24% of all students entering Basic Vocational Schools (38% in 1980-81).

One typical characteristic of Polish vocational education is that **students receive payments for their practical work periods**. This is true for students from public schools as well as for the students of factory schools (who, as a matter of fact have the status of young workers which also entitles them to insurance and payment of additional bonuses). Enterprises get these expenses refunded from the Labor Fund which was created in 1990 to assist in combating unemployment and is accumulated by a 2% tax on wages (to be paid by enterprises and individuals). The Fund is administered by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, adding to the complexity of overall management of the VET system. Also apprentices in the craft system are financed through the Labor Fund. There is presently some discussion going on between the two ministries whether this practice should be continued or whether resources from the Fund should flow into general investments for the vocational training system. The Ministry of Labor is against changing the situation.

The financing of the system, in general, is presently the most important problem to be solved. Financial problems exist at all levels and endanger already the day-to-day running of the system (payments of salaries, school maintenance, energy costs etc.), not to speak about finding resources for necessary changes. While

financial obligations of the Ministry of National Education have considerably increased (due to the withdrawal of other ministries and formerly state-run enterprises from the training scene, and to the demographic pressure on post-elementary schools), its budget has been repeatedly cut in an attempt by the Government to solve its budget deficits. While, overall expenditures for education are relatively low as compared to other west European countries, it has been suggested (amongst others by the World Bank) that educational spending is highly inefficient and that a careful review of present spending practice could certainly alleviate some of the financial problems. It has also been noted that at the level of Kuratoria wide differences exist with respect to costing procedures. The financial shortages play an important role in the standing conflict between the government and the trade unions. As a result the environment for joint searching for solutions has deteriorated and may further invalidate participatory cooperations of social partners on educational matters.

4.5.3. Comparative remarks

In the case of Poland, and given the economic situation, financing of vocational education and training is one of the most difficult issues to be solved. This problem appears to block modernization of any of the other issues discussed by us. Earlier, it has been mentioned that probably a much more efficient use could be made of existing financial resources but this is one of the instances where the distinction has to be made between the transition period and more permanent solutions.

There are at least three reasons why such a differentiation has to be made. The first one is demographic: the transition period is marked by an expansion of the teenage population (14-17 years old) during 1988-98 by some 16%. The only socializing institution during this age is education, and it is highly unlikely that secondary general education in the short run will be able to take up this challenge alone. Thus, the problems of the educational system cannot be solved by merely changing the quantitative streams. The second reason to distinguish a transition period is economic in nature: the interim phase, preceding full scale transformation, implies realistically speaking the prevalence of traditional productive capacities in agriculture and industry, attempting to recuperate their potential for competitive coexistence with the new and modern business ventures in manufacturing and services. In the short run there will not be a radical transformation of the occupational structure but changes will occur, and it will be the young generation of schoolleavers which has to be prepared for this. In social terms, the transition period would cover the time period in which the first generation of the adult work force exposed to the new patterns of required social behavior will have a fair chance to withdraw from the labor market on their own will. Yet, there

will be a great need for retraining among the younger adults. The polymorphic nature of the demand for training and retraining during this period will call for a polyvalent response from the educational system.

For the period of transition the establishment of a mixed financing system would be most recommendable. This should provide incentives for the enterprises to participate in the practical part of vocational education and retraining. In this period the existing school-based training capacities (both facilities and training staff) must be improved; simultaneously new training workshops must be established both within and outside the firms.

A mixed financing system could be organized as follows:
The state should use tax proceeds to finance the school-based training capacities and the institutional infrastructure for vocational education (research and development, administration etc.).

The training workshops both within and outside the firms should be financed by a fund (perhaps the Labor Fund) into which all the firms should be required to make payments related to either their turnover, or the overall payroll. The fund should be self-governed by an organization including employers, unions and government representatives. The distribution of the funds should be determined by the quality standards of the training.

The advantage of this concept is that it would offer a wide palette of training places independent of the firms, on the other hand the firms are included in the training process and encouraged to take part by the incentives. After the transition period this concept could be easily modified.

During the transition period, when industry is faced with a major problem of competitiveness, it seems difficult to expect business firms to contribute substantially to the cost of training. As Government resources are also very limited, borrowing could be explored as an additional source, in two different ways: by Government for financing the minimum level of investment that will be unavoidably required. By students, under some circumstances (e.g. training at a higher level, requiring expensive facilities). This is not likely to be popular, but the fact that training is a profitable investment should be again underlined.

In the long-term perspective, involving business firms should remain an objective. But incentives for a participation in the training of their personnel might be more efficient than imposing a global tax.

With respect to teachers and trainers, the only possible approach is probably a pragmatic one, based on the optimal utilization of all kinds of talents available. As far as possible, a complementarity should be organized between school teachers (mostly the existing ones) and instructors of practical subjects, mostly located in training centers. A good proportion of the latter could be recruited from industry, eventually on a part-time basis. It will be important to initiate a close relationship between the theoretical teachers and the practice trainers. For both categories, the status should guarantee a high level of mobility and flexibility, but at the same time should provide some incentives and motivation. In any case, a very large training and re-training program will be required to update and modernize the skills and qualifications of the teaching staff.

4.6. Special provision for the adult work force

4.6.1. The international experience

In industrialized countries, it is increasingly recognized that the training of the adult work force has become a high priority.

At the national level, it is a condition for the adaptation and renewal of the work force, especially in the new demographic context which reduces the number of new entrants on the labor market. It is also a necessity to limit the impact of structural changes.

At the firm level, continuous training of workers is now conceived as a profitable investment in human capital, in order to be able to adjust to changing products, technologies and organizations, and to increase the quality of goods and services. A highly skilled personnel is considered to be a major component of competitiveness.

At the level of the individual workers, training greatly facilitates occupational mobility and promotion. It is now clear, that no initial training can prepare an individual for all his life; in order to be able to adapt to changing conditions, he must be prepared for a process of continuous training.

Training of adult workers may take at least three different forms:

- Adjusting already employed workers to changes in technology, products and organization in their work environment is the responsibility of the employer. It is often considered that part of the success of the Japanese firms is explained by the emphasis that they place on training as a continuous process. Training takes place essentially on-the-job and belongs to the

responsibility of supervisors. But the whole firm is sometimes described as a learning organization.

- The second type of training is related to workers' mobility and promotion. It may require a longer period, possibly of further schooling. Here, the example may be that of Germany, where after completing their apprenticeship and having worked for a number of years, a substantial number of workers tend to follow courses of a higher level, leading to supervisory or management positions. This is often encouraged - and financed - by the firms themselves, while workers contribute with the time spent on courses - which may be full-time or evening courses;

- Most industrialized countries recently also have had to undertake large-scale programs for unemployed people, as a result of lay-offs by individual firms or of the restructuring of entire segments of industries (agriculture, textile, steel, mining, shipbuilding). Such programs have become primarily government responsibility, but regional authorities, business firms and trade unions are also involved. At EC level, special programs have been developed allowing for financial support of member states.

A few lessons may be drawn from the experiences of European countries, particularly with the third type of programs:

- Motivation of workers is an essential condition for the efficiency of their training. If they are employed, the motivation may be related to a salary rise or to promotion. If they are unemployed, it will concern essentially the perceived usefulness of the training for finding an acceptable job.

- Low-skilled workers usually have had bad experiences at school and consequently are reluctant to go back to school, or sit in a classroom where traditional teaching methods are offered. A different approach should be developed for them.

- Low-skilled workers also often have an inferiority complex about what they know. Particularly when they are unemployed, they tend to be hopeless about their capacity to learn. It is very essential to encourage them by starting with a positive assessment of their present level of knowledge and experience.

- The most difficult problems are encountered in the case of training of long-term unemployed people. The risk involved here is that the initial potential, both in terms of motivation and skills, for becoming re-employed gradually disappears. The longer the period of unemployment, the greater the risk that

one remains unemployed. For this reason, the training of unemployed should be tackled as soon as possible exactly in order to avoid the extension of the unemployment period.

4.6.2. The situation in Poland

The reform of the vocational training system in Poland, considering the social and economic circumstances, will require a relatively long time. This means that a large part of the short- and medium term adaptations made necessary by the economic transformation must be achieved through continuing education. Such continuing education will have an extremely broad public to cater for; it most certainly also will have to cover a wide range of skills, both technical and social ones. One may assume, that continuing education cannot be restricted to vocational education and training but will have to cover for large numbers of - especially the older generations - forms of general education as well. In addition, in view of world economic developments and the demographic situation at the turn of the century, there will be an urgent need for a well developed infrastructure for continuous education and training.

In the chapter on Challenges and Constraints for Poland, we have already pointed at the important role which has to be played by continuous education. We have also described how over the past twenty years it has been especially adult an continuous education which has suffered from decreasing state expenditures. One has to admit, therefore, that the necessary institutional framework is not available as yet. We should make a distinction between (a) the education of adults which forms part of the school-based system, (b) the out-of-school type of course based training, traditionally catered for by a small number of large, quasi-monopolist but self-financing training organizations and now the field where a training market is developing, and (c) retraining for the unemployed. The last area understandably has to be constructed from scratch.

While until 1990 each organization engaged in out-of-school forms of education and training needed a license from the Ministry of National Education, afterwards such licenses have been given by local Kuratoria. In 1989 there were about 500 institutions licensed to provide training, out of whom about 150 were active country-wide; in the first half of 1991, 750 new licenses have been given, 75% of them involving foreign language course, mainly english.

Traditionally, in Poland the field of adult education and training has never been completely monopolized by the state. Although schools for adults have existed (suffering from a decreasing state subvention), a number of country-wide operating organizations have existed, of which the Association of Vocational

Upgrading Institutions (ZDZ) has been one of the biggest. ZDZ accounted for more than 50% of all courses given in Poland in 1990, with centers in all towns with more than 10.000 inhabitants and over 20.000 teachers and trainers employed. While ZDZ used to cover mainly traditional types of courses leading to recognized diplomas, it increasingly operating in new areas (management, small business, languages, training for unemployed etc.) and undergoing internal reorganizations. Since it has been occupying a quasi-monopolist position, but financially independent from direct state subventions, its fate has been very much connected with the ability of enterprises and individuals to pay for its courses. Following the general trend, also ZDZ has come under tremendous pressures. Similar stories can be told about the other large national organizations.

Apart from internal reports from the large training institutions, there is no systematic information available concerning the scope of training activities. The Central Statistical Office only published data for 1990 (see for details the description of Polish VET in the annex to this report). It seems, however, that the market has been quicker then the school system to respond to some of the urgent training needs that have arisen in Poland. However, this is true only for some of the most urgent - and accordingly most profitable - needs (foreign languages, management training, secretaries, etc.) and for those who could afford to pay for such courses. The school-based and state financed system of adult education while being integrated in the system of initial vocational education, remains dependent on the effects of the overall modernization of the VET system.

For many reasons, the construction of a system for training of the unemployed does get off the ground only very slowly. One of the major causes has been that labor market institutions, as they existed in the previous system, were completely unprepared for their new tasks, in terms of resources, staff, equipment and know how. A whole infrastructure had to be developed, including the training of labor office staff. Secondly, while first efforts have been concentrated on allowing for the registering and payment of unemployed, the implementation of retraining measures has long remained an unknown field of work, both for labor office staff and for existing training organizations. Thirdly, there has been fairly little interest among the unemployed to engage in retraining. For this, again, a number of reasons are accountable: the difference between minimum salaries and unemployment benefits are not very high, but more importantly, perspectives for stable employment opportunities are missing. As a result, so far only neglectible numbers of unemployed have followed retraining courses and very small amounts of available budgets (from the Labor Fund) have been spent on retraining.

While, at the end of 1991, unemployment amounted to 11,4% it was understood that the level would increase still dramatically with the postponed reform of many large state owned factories. Now, unemployment is largely concentrated in traditional "poor" regions characterized by low levels of industrialization and/or "obsolete" sectors of industry, previously producing for the East European markets. Unemployment is also concentrated among the young generation (65% are younger than 34 years of age) and among those with low levels of education (one third of the unemployed has only primary school, another third has basic vocational education). Schoolleavers are among the most vulnerable group on the labor market, simply because of the lack of new positions. While there is some debate about the exact number, studies published by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy indicate that more than 20% of all schoolleavers are registered as unemployed. Again, among them those with only basic vocational education form the majority: in 1990 with 35% and in 1991 with 50%. However, also among leavers from secondary vocational schools unemployment rates are high: in 1990 they reached 37% and in 1991, 56%. While these figures do indicate the obsolescence of the VET system they also seem to indicate that retraining as such will not solve the unemployment problem. Retraining will have to be accompanied by employment creation.

4.6.3. Comparative remarks

Due to the large scale of the adult education and training necessary, it will be very difficult to point at relevant West European experiences. There are simply no comparable developments in the western societies. At the most one might cite what has happened to structural crisis sectors (and regions) such as mining, steel and shipbuilding, examples where modernization also caused great difficulties in many countries. In the German case one advantage was that the restructuring process began under favorable economic conditions.

One may also cite the current problems in Eastern Germany as the most relevant comparison. Here, according to official estimates, three million employees must be reemployed in the next few years, which will only be possible with the help of retraining and further training programs.

Experiences in East Germany show that **market forces are not capable of creating the necessary supply of retraining and further training programs**. All the social forces must be mobilized in order to solve this gigantic problem. The State, and more in particular the Federal Office for Labor, plays a central role in financing these programs and provides several billion DM per year for qualification programs. Program implementation occurs as closely to the market as possible. Firms, private training organizations, the industry-wide training and

continuing education institutions of the Chambers (industry, commerce and handicraft chambers) as well as other institutions are included in the realization of the measures.

A special organizational form has been developed to cope with this problem the so called "organizations for employment and qualification". These organizations are usually formed by municipalities or by combining private and public institutions. Their goal is to link qualification and continuing education processes with the development of new fields of employment within the region. They can be described as publicly financed agencies for qualification and innovation. Utilizing existing production capabilities the organization pursues the development of products and processes with which the participants, after a certain start phase, can form their own firm. "Companies for employment and qualification" are designed to supplement rather than to compete with firms currently operating in the market. Accordingly their existence is usually limited to three to five years. Afterwards, specific departments - for example the department for retraining and further education or particular production departments (i.e. in ecological areas or urban renewal) - can establish themselves as separate firms in the market. The advantage of this organization form is that by combining qualification and work they can offer a varied qualification program and can run courses which include practical work experience and concrete employment perspectives. One drawback may be that the organizations are often viewed as the weaker brother of private enterprises and the employment perspectives are not certain (Bosch and Neumann 1991).

Regardless of which solution for continuing education is chosen it is clear that the importance of practical work experience is greater here, than for the initial vocational education. In the case of the Polish VET system which can be described as school-based, the restructuring of the retraining system could have almost immediate positive effects on the modernization of the initial vocational education and training system.

It is clear that re-training of workers is likely to be a priority issue in Poland, but also that the conditions will be very difficult in view of the uncertainty concerning future employment prospects. These problems require broad orientations at the national level, but even more a decentralized organization, taking into account the local context, the interest of existing and emerging employers and the individual situation and motivation of workers.

This is particularly true of Poland in the present circumstances. The magnitude of the effort to be undertaken should not be underestimated. But further discussion of this central issue would require more specific investigations at the

regional, sectorial and occupational levels and more discussions with the different parties concerned. The framework for such further work could be formed by the ideas presented earlier: to **shift from a sector oriented to a local- or regional-oriented system, and to work towards the establishment of local VET systems, or networks, in which all relevant actors from initial -, further -, and retraining institutions work together, efficiently using available local resources**. Against the background of recent West European experience, it should by all means be avoided that separate sub systems develop with different standards, contents, certificates and - above all - infra-structures and facilities.

If done with a certain vision and awareness of the educational and training needs in the medium term, the building-up of an infrastructure for retraining of the unemployed could not only contribute to a relatively fast modernization of initial vocational eduction programs, it could also provide the necessary basis (in terms of facilities, resources, staff and programs) for a well probed system for continuous education that Poland will most certainly need to avail of by the turn of the century.

4.7. Conclusions: Polish VET in international perspective

The old VET system in Poland, developed to serve a centrally-led economic system, has been based on more or less direct and exclusive relations between the schooling system and the production system, mediated by the respective technical ministries and central agencies. This system still exists in its basic architecture.

A new system will have to educate with a much higher degree of uncertainty, due to the introduction of the labor market, and due to the existence of market oriented enterprises. This implies that fundamental structural changes will have to be introduced, in addition to the long-needed modernization of the system.

The new VET system will have to respond to a new constellation of interest groups, of whom especially the private employers and the independent trade unions will play a key role. It will have to respond to completely new phenomena such as high levels of unemployment and frequent adaptation of educational contents, and it will be confronted with the appearance of new institutions such as the local employment offices with responsibilities for retraining of the unemployed. This, in turn will force traditional VET institutions (schools, training centers and enterprises) to redefine their role in the VET system, and to redefine their relationships with each other. This process has only just begun and is, obviously, characterized by a tendency to conserve established positions.

From the summary of the present developments and discussions in Poland, it appears that the debate and the reform proposals are largely colored by "internal" experiences, and by rather general ideas concerning the impact of a market economy on vocational education and training. There is no nationally shared, broad orientation with respect to the direction of vocational education reforms. There is also not much discussion as yet concerning the modalities of implementation of any type of reforms. It is exactly here that comparative analysis and international cooperation are useful means for cost-effective policy development.

When looking at what is happening in the field of vocational education and training in Poland we observe a rather dramatic situation: (a) a serious crisis of the overall VET system, especially with respect to the traditional areas of initial education and further training of youth and adults, on the one hand, and (b) only the beginnings of the setting-up of a system of retraining for the unemployed and largely within the framework of passive labor market policies (Lehmann 1992). In Poland, the VET system as a major part of the educational system at large, has been the object of criticism already since the middle of the 1970s. While no serious reforms have been undertaken since - on the contrary, one has to observe an increasing under-investment both in human resources and in facilities - the VET system was badly in need of modernization already long before the breakdown of the centrally-led economic system. Moreover, many actors in the system continue to behave along the patterns developed earlier: schools, educational authorities, parents, and students alike. The educational system and its actors have to learn themselves to act and behave according to a different logic. This is the main pedagogical challenge for the VET system itself and it can become much easier accomplished by a systematic confrontation with VET systems from more experienced countries.

At present, the situation is aggravated by the fact that the collapse of VET in Poland is now gradually involving practically all elements of the system: decision-making structures, financing, content development, provision, monitoring and evaluation, and also research and development. The collapse of research and development infrastructures, even though occasionally blamed for being to narrowly pedagogically oriented and rather apologetic in nature, now seriously hinders the reconstruction of a modern VET system. There is no sufficient capacity for comparative analysis and policy development in the vacuum thus created.

Then, on the other side of Europe, we can observe VET systems having recently gone through rather turbulent periods of change in an attempt to cope with new demands posed by developments on the labor market. One such period has not

yet been completely closed as yet, while a next period of changes is already on the horizon. The first one - which amongst others gave birth to a specialized EC institution for the development of vocational education, CEDEFOP, and which was the result of (and in some cases even produced) a growing awareness of the fundamental role played by vocational education for socio-economic development - , was characterized by the attempt to make the VET systems, such as they had developed in each country gradually after World War II, more effective and efficient, both in social and economic respect. This phase has witnessed a whole wave of research and measures of different kinds. It has covered most of the 1970s and 1980s, and for some countries and for some of the issues, still continues. Key words from this period are: equal opportunities, youth employment, alternance training, decentralization of decision-making, involvement of trade unions and employers, interrelationships between educational and employment systems, flexibilization, professional research and development, the use of new media and technologies, and also international comparability of qualifications.

There is a growing awareness, however, that the countries of Western Europe are on the brink of a much greater challenge, resulting from a combination of old and new phenomena: growing educational and occupational aspirations of the population, demographic trends leading to a decrease of labor market entrants, the availability of new types of technology, and an increased international competition leading to new types of reactions from firms with respect to the very use of technologies, work organization and labor force. As a result, the traditional relatively stable, occupations-based systems of vocational education and training, of labor markets, and work organizations (different as they are within the individual countries) are "loosening-up". The production, use and recognition of qualifications is becoming more open-ended, more flexible, and - therefore - undergoing more or less continuous change.

These trends will question some of the solutions found for the "first-phase-problems" and are going to ask for much more radical reforms of vocational education and training systems. One common aspect is the awareness that vocational specialization should be postponed as much as possible and be firmly grounded in a good basic general and theoretical education. This has put the issue of initial vocational education within the larger framework of the overall educational system:

- Vocational education is increasingly being seen in its relationship with both primary education and higher education, and not only as a sub-system directly producing for the labor market.

- Secondly, there is a growing awareness that the systems of initial vocational education, on the one hand, and the systems of further training and retraining, on the other, which in most countries have developed into separate systems should become integrated in one overall VET system of continuous learning.

- These developments increase the need for broad national and international consensus about orientations and standards. On the other hand, there is a growing need to develop decentralized and flexible mechanisms for delivery of vocational education and training.

It is understood that some countries will be better equipped to stand this challenge than others.

Against this background, the question that should concern us is whether Poland (and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe), given the comparative backwardness of their VET systems at the moment, will be able to make a **qualitative leap** forward which would enable them to reconstruct their VET systems in such a way that they can respond to the new challenges as well. In other words, will they be able to learn and implement for their own tomorrow the lessons that can be learned from yesterday's experiences **and** tomorrow's scenarios from Western Europe?

When trying to answer this question on the basis of the analysis undertaken in this report, one tends to be rather skeptical about Poland's chances to do so. There are several reasons for such skepticism:

- The conditions which have gradually developed in the West European countries over the past 15-20 years of change in VET systems, and which would now enable them, more or less, to cope with the new challenges, are as yet absent. There is only the beginning of an awareness of the need for "phase 1" changes. The modernization of the VET system is being discussed in Poland following the principles of the national discussions of 15-20 years ago, or rather ad-hoc adapted to the basics of a simplistic perception of market economy.

- Secondly, discussions and policy decisions about the modernization of vocational education and training are taking place without the support of sound empirical information about the main problems of the present systems. Specialized vocational education research institutions have been found too narrowly oriented on pedagogical issues to be useful for the present situation and became dissolved. The attention from the academic community for vocational education is rather low and not very much policy oriented.

Academic research is also mostly of a pedagogic nature: economic and sociological research on vocational education issues is almost completely absent. Policy development is severely hampered by the absence of a supporting research and development infrastructure. The existing structure of ministries cannot provide the necessary capacities and because of prevailing employment conditions it appears to be extremely difficult to attract and keep highly-qualified staff for such purposes. As a result, ministries tend to fall back on an ad-hoc basis on the support of personal advisers. Consequently, the circle of professionals available for competent assistance to policy makers remains very small and lacks sufficient support from a stable well grounded research community.

- Thirdly, there is apparently little information and knowledge about recent developments in Western Europe available among the main actors and decision-makers now involved in modernization of VET systems. Research and information in this area was traditionally the domain of a rather small group of experts which in the meantime has disappeared from the scene. Projects of international collaboration were usually - even with partners from other East European countries - of a formal or even ideological nature. Foreign experiences, again, are used in an ad-hoc way and without careful analysis of their usefulness and validity for the specific situation. Expertise and knowledge available elsewhere are hardly used by educational decision-makers.

- Finally, international cooperation and assistance in this area is weak, ad-hoc and very segmented: partly as a result of priority-setting by the respective governments themselves. The main international donors, with the largest budgets and the most comprehensive programs, such as the World Bank are generally operating on the basis of a vision towards Vocational Education and Training which has been developed basically as a result of their work with developing countries of the Third World and which is neither very much in line with European trends of the recent past, nor based on an understanding of VET traditions of the individual Central and East European countries. Donor countries sometimes work on the assumption that their systems are the best and therefore worth importing. Very often, however, on the Polish side there is a lack of competent capacities for international cooperation and for the implementation of foreign cooperation projects. No systematic evaluation of their outcome is taking place either.

5. General conclusions and proposals for action

5.1. Introduction: Educational change as a learning process

This report has been prepared as a contribution to bringing Polish society closer to an integrated Europe. The integration of Europe is not only a matter of politics and economics; it has profound social implications, indeed it will only be successful if social cohesion can be achieved. Thus, there is a growing conviction that Europe must, for economic and social reasons alike, invest heavily in its human capital if it is to be in a position to confront and master the challenges of the coming decades.

All EC countries have already recognized the need for (a) **increasing** the level of qualifications of new entrants to the labor market, (b) **updating and upgrading** the qualifications of the existing work force through continuing education and training, and (c) **providing** education and training of a kind which will lead to increased rates of participation in the labor force among disadvantaged, or hitherto underrepresented groups.

The importance of human assets is also recognized in Poland. If the comparative analysis presented in the preceding chapters is correct, modernization of the Polish Vocational Education and Training system becomes vital. We have argued in this report that such modernization would not only have to refer to changes in the structure of the educational system, or to changes in the contents of the curricula. Indeed, it has been stressed that the most crucial issue is to change the very "logic" according to which the Polish VET system has been - and to a certain extent still is - functioning. This concerns especially the existing relations between the VET system and the employment system, the institutions that have been created in the past to organize the "communication" between these two systems which still guide expectations and behavior of many people.

It should be realized, however, that educational reforms cannot be implemented overnight. Experiences, made in Poland and elsewhere, provide ample evidence that new educational structures cannot be simply imposed by legal acts. Such changes take time, need proper and careful preparation, some political stability, sufficient resources for their implementation, and - above all - require from the start the participation and involvement of all actors concerned, educational authorities, teachers, students and their parents, firms, trade unions (Husen 1992). Moreover, changes in vocational education and training are intricately interrelated with changes in the employment system. It is of course true that firms and trade unions momentarily do not give high priority to educational matters.

Awareness of the role of time and participation becomes even more important when educational change is part of systemic transformation of a society in crisis, as is the case in present Poland. Modernization of the Polish VET system is to take place while simultaneously the employment system is undergoing fundamental changes and clear reference points are not yet available. Under such conditions, obviously, modernization of the educational system cannot follow lines of action that are fully clear from the beginning. Modernization would need a certain degree of experimentation and therefore has to be considered itself as a profound learning process for all actors involved.

In the light of such considerations nobody will, at this point of time, be able to present a detailed blueprint of how the Polish VET system will have to look like, nor to give detailed and precise instructions as to how to achieve this. Nevertheless, it is possible on the basis of experiences made elsewhere in Europe, to indicate the core issues that have to be addressed for Polish VET to be able to cope with its future tasks. This may be disappointing for those policy makers who expect definite proposals that will lead to predictable success immediately. We should be frank and open, however, and underline that, apart from a number of recommendations concerning changes in the VET system which have been put forward already for a long time by many experts - inside and outside Poland -, immediate solutions for the more basic problems are not readily available. A change of the "logic" of the system can only be realized gradually by those who are involved in vocational education and training themselves, especially at the local level. Like any learning process, however, this particular process will not develop spontaneously and needs to be facilitated and intensified by proper interventions and guidance. Thus, our recommendations will focus on offering a realistic, and by all means pragmatic concept as to how to direct the modernization process so that it may properly respond to urgent needs arising from the labor market, prepare the ground for institutional reforms needed to face the challenges of the medium term, and make good use of available resources.

Before presenting our proposals in detail, we shall first briefly summarize the main assumptions on which they are based and indicate which of the already widely discussed reform measures would find our immediate agreement.

5.2. Basic assumptions for change strategies

When one takes a careful look at what has been written by great scholars on the issue of "modernization", then it appears that there is some agreement that the concept cannot be restricted to isolated economical or technical aspects. Modernization has to be understood as a strategy which relates economic,

technical, social and also psychological dimensions of development (Lerner 1968; Sainsaulieu 1990; Zapf 1991).

Modernization of VET: Self-responsibility for social and occupational biography

When translating such understanding of the modernization process to the Polish VET system, then it is obvious that - without underestimating their importance under the present conditions - we cannot only speak about providing technical equipment and financial means. Instead, the focus turns to the very contents and methods of education and training and on changing them in such a way that they develop, among youth and adults alike, an awareness about their new societal and occupational roles, and provide them with the skills to become responsible for their own biography.

This implies also, that we have to go beyond traditional reform proposals that aim at changing the structures of existing institutions **inside** the vocational education and training system. We rather have to probe which new forms and mechanisms of communication are to be created, both within the VET system and **between** the school and the labor market, so that individual initiative and independence can be promoted.

The time dimension for modernization: open architecture for the Polish VET system

We consider the modernization of the Polish VET system as a process-in-time and not as a single policy act. While in the case of the latter institutional reform would do, our position has almost opposite implications. It means above all, that we assume that a "final" architecture of the new VET system in Poland remains largely open for a considerable time, and that Polish VET will most probably be characterized by the "living together" of different solutions. At different moments and in different places different problems will occur, for which - realistically speaking - different resources will be available.

In the discussions about the future challenges to VET systems in Western countries some directions and tendencies have gradually become accepted (see in detail Chapter 3). These developments will undoubtedly become also relevant for Poland. However, how and under which conditions these tendencies are - or can be - adapted and implemented in Poland, can only be worked out during the practice of the modernization process. No definite time schedules or deadlines can be given. This does not mean, however, that vocational education has to take a passive stand and wait until things are more clear. On the contrary,

one of the major lessons of the past twenty years from EC countries shows that VET can play a very active role in social and economic development both by making people capable to take employment initiatives and by simply creating demand for qualifications that previously were not available.

If it is accepted that the modernization of the VET system not only implies a change of institutional structures, but of attitudes, behavior and forms of communication as well, we have to assume that the transition period, which will take Poland to a modern society with a market economy, will certainly last at least one whole generation. This, of course, strengthens even more the important role that vocational education and training has to play during the transition period in adapting people to new situations and in preparing them for the future. VET is not only an agent that provides for (new) technical and economical skills and qualifications but it also transmits and develops individual aspirations and types of social behavior. No ideal architecture can be designed at this point: will the VET system be a school-based system, will it be a firm-based one, or will it have the characteristics of a dual system? The relevant question at present is how to solve concrete problems in the best way, that is: pragmatic but using all possible experiences made elsewhere and all knowledge that is available about the future. Under the present conditions it is simply impossible, and at the same time a matter of wrong priorities, to work on a grand design of an overall modern VET system.

Starting points for Modernization: guided experiments with local VET networks

We assume that modernization of the VET system will have to start from presently available resources and with full involvement of the locally existing actors. Realistically speaking, - and apart from the absence of any comprehensive reform concept - neither the vast financial means, nor the human resources needed to develop and implement a fundamental reform, are available in Poland. On the other hand, we have the strong impression that initiatives, resources and capacities that are present at the local level (including those supported by foreign assistance) are not fully, or efficiently used. One reason for this may be exactly be the desire to look for a quick overall reform.

It is not only because of future uncertainty and lack of basic resources that makes it unwise to set all hopes on a grand reform. It seems especially important, after a long period of central regulation and bureaucratic administration, to depart from a traditional "top-down" reform conception. Instead, the guiding principle should be to improve and promote self-responsibility and self-initiative of local actors. Observers have noted, however, the "learned helplessness" among local

actors and their widespread waiting for guidelines and directions from "above". Even in cases where initiatives have been developed the chance for success is frequently hampered by the lack of supporting infrastructures. Therefore, it is an illusion that local initiatives for modernization can be achieved by relying only on the operation of spontaneous forces of the market. A "bottom-up" strategy asks for well designed and planned projects within an overall framework, for the realization of which public support is needed, in terms of finances as well as in terms of professional advice and coordination.

Therefore, we propose to promote the modernization process of the VET system with a series of decentralized experiments at the local, sectorial or regional level. These experiments have to be coordinated and monitored at the national level so that they can function as building stones for a general modernization of the VET system. The experiments would need proper conceptional and institutional support. (We shall elaborate this proposal in section 5.4.)

Re-valuation of education and training

A successful modernization of both the VET and the employment system can only be achieved when Polish society recaptures the value given to education and training. Concretely, this means that individual investments in education - in terms of time and money - will have to be reflected in occupational positions, and in income- and salary levels. This is true for the privately organized sector of the economy, as well as for the state organized sector of public services, including education. Obviously, this will imply a fundamental reversion of developments that have occurred over the last forty years. The problem of wage and salary levels for different types of occupations has become widely recognized in Polish society and needs not to be further elaborated at this point. Western countries have also made the experience that higher levels of education invoke dissatisfaction with traditional forms of work organization and contents of work: people want to be able to make use of the qualifications and skills achieved. Indeed, it has been argued that the widening gap between quality levels in education and employment has been one of the causes of social and economic crisis in Poland (Adamski).

Relationships between education and work have become extremely complex in modern societies and these relationships can no longer be institutionalized through strictly separated and static systems of education and employment, as used to be the case in many Western countries; nor can their complexity be denied through an administrative system of formal one-sided dependencies, as used to be the case in Poland (Grootings 1989). Forms of mutual communication

and adaptation between education and employment have become crucial, and for these to function material (income) and immaterial (content of work) incentives and rewards are to be recognized as vital elements.

5.3. Focal points for modernization of Polish VET

This is not the first and also not the only report that has been written on the modernization of the Polish VET system. Some of the recommendations that have been made earlier by other experts are fully supported by us and therefore do not need further extensive coverage. Proposals for change that would meet our acceptance include the following:

- To radically decrease the quantitative importance of basic vocational schooling, and to simultaneously upgrade the quality of this type of education;
- to improve flexibility and possibilities for internal mobility of the VET system (and there are various ways to do so);
- to change the mono-industrial character of vocational schools;
- to restore and improve the participation of enterprises in the practical parts of vocational education and training;
- to broaden the training profiles and to concentrate on a smaller number of such profiles;
- to improve the education and training in foreign languages, new technologies and environmental issues;
- to develop education and training for the newly emerging service occupations in trade and commerce;
- to promote education and training in management, entrepreneurship, as well as for small businesses;
- to develop a retraining system against protracted unemployment;
- to redesign the organization and contents of adult education;
- to improve initial education and further training of teachers;
- to improve vocational and occupational guidance;
- to simplify the national structures for administration and management of the VET system, and to improve especially coordination between the Ministries of National Education and of Labor and Social Policy;
- to improve - or rather rebuild - the supporting infrastructure for curriculum development, research and evaluation.

All these recommendations have repeatedly been made, and they undoubtedly are necessary elements of any modernization strategy as we have tried to show in the comparison between the Polish VET system and developments in EC countries (see Chapter 4). Although these issues have been recognized in Poland for a long time, most of them have so far not been realized. The reasons

for this are to be found on different levels (see Chapter 2). One main reason - apart from the lack of political will - has always been the absence of concrete conceptions and infrastructures for the **implementation** of changes. Under the present conditions, changes and their implementation are receiving an additional quality as they are related - contrary to the past - to a change of the very logic of the system: a realistic change strategy becomes even more necessary.

In view of this situation and against the background of the assumptions that have been spelled out before, we want to discuss in the following sections possible change strategies concerning (a) the contents of vocational education and training, (b) their organization, and (c) their financing.

5.3.1. Training for uncertainty: Towards new contents and methods of vocational education

In times of radical economic and technological change VET systems are confronted with the problem as to how to develop practice oriented education in the absence of clear points of reference and with uncertain future employment perspectives. Such is also the situation in Poland made somewhat more complex by the specific crisis problems of the transition period.

The only way to deal with such situations of uncertainty, is (a) to bring vocational education closer to the existing reality of enterprises and regional labor markets, and (b) to secure that in the training programs and training methods sufficient attention is being given to developing skills - both technical and social - that enable people to cope with uncertainty.

This would mean, first of all, that instead of the traditional practical work periods (which have been largely characterized by the execution of simple work tasks), a real participation of enterprises in practical learning has to be developed. Practical work has to be changed into practical learning. Following the trends and experiences from western countries, the long-term aim should be to achieve an "integrated dualism" where vocational schools function as the site of general and technical theoretical education, and enterprises as the site of practical vocational training, and where theoretical subjects and practical exercises are well integrated.

Obviously, in the initial phase and during the transition period enterprises have to be assisted in this role since what is asked from them is not to provide anymore simple work places for young workers, but challenging training places for young students. One of the conditions would be to have inside the enterprise professional trainers available with sufficient pedagogical skills. Such trainers can be

recruited and developed in different ways (Dupont and Reis 1991). Where enterprises are not, or not yet, in a position to play such a role in vocational education, or where there are not sufficient enterprises with training capacities - such as in rural areas - Regional Training Centers could be established to cater for practical training.

In order not to limit the occupational mobility of students and trainees to the local or enterprise-specific labor market, educational programs and curricula should be developed according to the principle of "progressive specialization". This would mean that in the first phase of education, basic knowledge and skills (technical, professional and social) of a more general nature are to be transmitted at the level of broad occupational areas such as "engineering", "construction", "electrotechnics", "commerce and trade", etc. The second phase would aim at a first specialization at the level of related occupations. Only in a third phase the special skills and qualifications for a specific occupation (which should not be defined too narrowly and at a too low level) are to be developed with a major share of practical learning. The principle of "progressive specialization" is relatively independent from the overall organization of the learning process, i.e. whether this is school- or enterprise based, or whether this is structured more traditionally on an annual basis, or according to modules. There are ample examples for the practical organization of initial vocational education along these lines from several EC countries that could be used for adaptation under Polish conditions. These examples are available in written documents but can also be studied on the spot.

Such a broadly designed vocational education takes into account that vocational education cannot serve any longer for life-long employment in one single job, but has to provide the necessary foundations for both occupational activity and continuous education and training. Initial vocational education is no longer final education but only the first phase of a continuous life-long learning process. Poland undoubtedly shares this concern with western countries.

Especially during the transition period, Poland will have a tremendous additional need for retraining of the work force. The great efforts needed to develop within a short period of time a well functioning system of retraining offer good chances for the simultaneous development of both initial vocational education and further education. The market seems to react at present mainly to the needs for management training and business services; the equally high need for retraining of the unemployed and of those who are living and working in crisis regions requires the provision of public support. Our proposal to set up regional centers would provide the opportunity to very quickly realize new forms and contents of training. Experiences made in retraining, and with the developing regional labor

market could easily enter into the programs for initial education. As much as possible such regional centers should therefore be multi-occupational, accessible for all vocational institutions from the region (including the schools that have no other access to practical training places) and make use of existing facilities and resources (including teaching staff). It may even be possible to physically locate regional training centers in the premises of existing schools. In the next section we shall make a more detailed proposal.

Besides a renewal of educational contents, **methods and forms of education and training** play a crucial role in the achievement of modern vocational skills. For trainees to learn such elementary skills as to be able to act independently, to communicate, and cooperate with others, they necessarily have to be involved actively in the educational process. This means a fundamental departure from traditional classroom and teacher-centered forms of education. Many forms of such active types of learning have already been developed, such as work in projects, group learning, simulation games etc. However, and this should not be forgotten, such new methods of education assume new roles for teachers and trainers. Teachers and trainers cease to be the vocational and technical experts of encyclopedic knowledge or practical skills and rather become competent organizers of experience- and learning processes (Dupont and Reis 1991). The learning process can be further supported by the interactive use of new media. Undoubtedly this will have implications for the training and recruitment of teaching staff. Again, there are many practical experiences already made in various countries. Indeed, a well organized network exists for the exchange of such experiences through several EC programs such as PETRA and EUROTECNET.

5.3.2. Organization of VET: Local flexibility and national standards.

Besides contents of educational programs (practice oriented and based on progressive specialization) and methods of education (aimed at the promotion of new technical and social skills), the problem of **recognition of educational qualifications** has to be solved in a new way. The traditional approach, also applied in Poland, has tried to exert central control on the quality of education through curricula programs and contents and has resulted in the contradictory situation where bureaucratic administration and inflexibility concerning "input" go together with a wide diversity of "output" quality levels across the country. Instead, and following recent experiences of several western countries, a **national framework for occupational standards and qualifications** should be elaborated. Provision of education and training (including definition of curricula contents) can be flexible and locally determined but within a nationally agreed framework of qualification requirements. Examinations or tests lead to

nationally - and eventually internationally - recognized qualifications. The system is to be valid for initial and further education and training and should also provide the quality standards for retraining programs.

An additional advantage of a system of national standards is that its elaboration has to involve not only representatives from the educational system. In most EC countries, industry and trade unions, representing the principal "users" of educational programs, discuss and elaborate basic occupational profiles which then form the basis for national qualification standards. The latter can be translated - in different ways and with the assistance of educational professionals - into educational and training programs. The role of national educational authorities is to guard that standards are consistent - nationally and internationally - and that mobility between different types and levels of education is secured. Polish educational authorities can make use of the vast experiences already made with such forms of organization of vocational education both at national (e.g. Denmark, Netherlands, Germany, United Kingdom) and international level in EC countries. One note of caution concerns the temptation to simply imitate one of these existing systems. Contrary to what developers of such national systems may occasionally want to convey, experience with the development of a European system of qualifications have shown that such national frameworks indeed reflect national systems of occupational qualifications which differ considerably from one to the other. A Polish system, therefore, will have to be developed in Poland, based on Polish realities. It should also be pointed out, that the development of national standards requires a hugh amount of work, implying major investments and the availability of a professional research and evaluation infrastructure. In the Polish case, however, the challenge of developing national standards may be used for restoring such research capacities.

5.3.4. Financing of the VET system: In search of a mixture of financial sources

Modernization of the Vocational Education and Training system cannot be achieved free of charge. Although also in Polish public opinion, it has been recognized that educational expenses are investments in the future, the financing of the VET system and of education in general has become a major obstacle due to the dramatic situation of the state budget.

While regular public expenditures for education in Poland are comparatively low, recent policy measures tend to exclude the possibilities for education to receive a bigger share from the state budget. Financial means for the modernization of the VET system have to be found elsewhere. There are several ways to be considered. First, by savings from more efficient and divert use of resources

from the state budget. Secondly, through the proper use of financial means made available additionally from other sources. Thirdly, by the - temporary - creation of new financial sources.

The principal criteria to be used for the choice of financing mechanisms (their collection and distribution) are to be derived from the purposes of education and training. In the case of Poland, and more in particular for the phase of transition, financing mechanisms should:

- contribute to an improvement of the quality of education and training and not simply to the survival of educational institutions;
- not lead to increased selective access to education and training;
- give incentives to enterprises to become actively involved in the practical parts of vocational education and training;
- encourage individuals to invest more in their own qualifications.

These criteria lead us to comment on the three different sources of financing mentioned earlier.

Possibilities for a more efficient use of existing resources from the state budget are primarily to be found through the revitalization of presently unused training facilities of the large enterprises (buildings, equipment, materials, know-how and staff). These facilities should be evaluated according to the possibilities they would offer for their transformation into regional multifunctional training centers (for initial education, further- and re-training). In the course of privatization measures, the ownership question of training facilities could be solved separately, for example through the establishment of regional tripartite training foundations such as being experimented in Bulgaria.

A second possibility is to transform the present mono-sectorial vocational schools into schools with a much broader vocational profile. This would imply fundamental changes in the overall management of vocational education at the national level. School facilities could also be used more efficiently for the provision of non-formal education and also could form the basis for regional training centers, especially where enterprise facilities are absent. This would imply a further decentralization of management responsibilities of vocational institutions.

A third possibility is to reconsider the role and position of teachers. Since teacher's salaries form the largest part of the state educational budget, a careful analysis of the specific local educational situation, the existing human resources and available know-how could eventually lead to a reallocation of staff. Retrain-

ing and further education of teachers should be integrated as much as possible with the development of regional centers mentioned above. Needless to say that such steps would have to involve delicate negotiations with representatives of the teaching staff concerning their social, economic and legal status.

International and bilateral assistance programs, which at present are hardly being efficiently used to the full, could be approached for the co-financing of pilot projects along the lines suggested above. In the framework of such projects assistance would include not only finances, but also technical assistance and assistance in kind especially in view of developing, equipping and management of regional centers. For the transition period a variety of educational programs and methods should be taken for granted. However, such diversity again increases the need for the elaboration of a system of national standards.

It should be considered whether it will be possible to require from industry a special training contribution which would primarily serve to finance enterprise based or regional training provisions. Such financial contributions exist in most western countries in different forms (related to turn-over or to wage bill) and could be replaced by direct practical training provision of firms, such as being experimented in Hungary. The existing payments to the Labor Fund could also be used for such purposes.

In order to achieve optimal cost efficiency, financing mechanisms should be designed which would allow the combined use of various financial sources at the local or regional level. Systems of co-financing or conditional financing should as much as possible replace automatic subventions in order to promote involvement and responsibility at local level. Distribution of financial means should be organized at the regional level with the participation of public administration and social partners.

We assume, that those forms of continuous education which primarily serve individual career or income improvements are to be financed through the market.

5.4. Experimenting with Modernization: Regional VET Networks and National Taskforce

5.4.1. Regional VET Networks: Involvement of social partners

With the aim of promoting the process of modernization of vocational education and training in Poland we propose that pilot projects be started for the development of **Regional Vocational Education Networks**.

Local VET networks would seek (a) the establishment of effective communication mechanisms between all actors and institutions at the local level, concerning training needs and provisions, and (b) to create the facilities to realize these in a flexible way, making the most efficient use of existing facilities and resources, on a qualitatively recognized level.

A "network" should be understood as a cooperative effort of firms, schools, training institutions, labor offices, chambers of commerce, and trade unions with the common aim to improve, at the local or regional level, the relationships between education and employment. Such networks should be organized around the establishment of **Regional Training Centers**, be initially funded from public sources and monitored and evaluated by research. They should be allowed considerable autonomy in the elaboration of models for new contents and methods of vocational education best adapted to prevailing local conditions and facilities.

Priority areas for the first series of such networks are to be found in (a) rural areas, with the view to respond to the crisis in agriculture and the lack of service infrastructures in such areas, (b) the mono-cultural traditional industrial areas, with the view to accommodating young and adult unemployed and offering them retraining according to developing needs of the local labor market, and (c) to cater for so far non-existing service sector occupations for which the educational school system has not yet found proper educational programs.

The Training Centers which are to be developed as one of the immediate activities of these networks should provide facilities for retraining and further education but also practical learning opportunities to students from vocational schools, pending the time that enterprises can play a substantial role in vocational education.

As such the centers can become experimentation bases for substantive modernization of vocational education, as well as for establishing a new "logic" in the communication between educational institutions and the labor market.

One has to keep in mind, however, that all forms of vocational training and continuous education are connected with employment perspectives. Experience has learned that training is a necessary condition, but as such cannot solve any unemployment problem. Moreover, people are only interested and motivated to enter training if they see realistic chances to improve their employment situation. It has been argued before that the extremely low numbers of unemployed that presently are involved in retraining measures in Poland are to be

partially explained by the absences of employment perspectives. Therefore, **the combination of training and employment is crucial**. While we are not able, in this context, to discuss this matter in detail, it is possible to indicate possible options for policy making.

It will take some time before Polish industry and services have reached European levels of productivity and quality. The actual discussion in Poland concerning privatization is increasingly aware of the social implications of privatization measures since these will inevitably lead to restructuring or closing down of existing enterprises. It is being argued that the State will have to play a - temporary - protective role in order to prevent a social and political catastrophe (Frydmann and Rapaczynski 1992). However, in our opinion, this should not mean that the required protective intervention by the State is to be a passive one and limited only to the ownership question. We would insist that the time necessary to implement this simultaneous process of privatization and restructuring of Polish industry be used to stabilize existing skill potentials and preferably even to develop new potentials for which there will be an increasing demand on the labor market.

Thus, in combination with the Regional Training Centers proposed before, there will be a need for the development of centers which go beyond offering training facilities, and which, for a transition period, would combine training and employment. Taking as an example the well probed Training and Employment Companies in Germany ("Qualifizierungs- und Beschäftigungsgesellschaften"), such Centers could be involved in infrastructural work to be financed by local authorities, but also in product and enterprise development in private firms, or in firms that are to be privatized. The aim of such Centers would always have to be the promotion of small and medium sized enterprises through a combination of training- and employment measures of a temporary nature. For this to be achieved, it will be necessary that the Centers not only offer technical qualifications, but also administrative, commercial and managerial ones. There is ample experience with such Centers available for adaptation under Polish conditions.

Funds and technical assistance for the establishment of VET networks, including resourcing of the training centers, could come from the various international and bi-lateral assistance programs, preferably on the basis of a co-financing system which combines local, national and international funds. This could also lead to a better and more strategic use of foreign resources. There should be close cooperation between the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy in the implementation of their respective assistance programs for adult and youth training. Experience learns that such

cooperation is easier to be developed at the local level in the solution of practical problems, than at the central level between administrations.

One of the major conditions for the successful realization of innovative policy measures is the availability of adequate implementation capacities. In view of the absence of any experience at the local level with the implementation of actions proposed by us, a specialized and professional **Development Team** should be established for the mobilization and coaching of local actors in the pilot projects. Each project should be coordinated on a full-time base by a member of the Development Team. Local actors should be put in the position, also financially, to actively engage in the development of VET networks. There should be enough funds for process and output evaluation in order to make proper dissemination of experiences possible.

5.4.2. National Task Force for the Modernization of the Polish VET system: Mobilization and evaluation

We know that a number of initiatives along the lines that we propose have already been taken (supported by EC Phare and by bilateral programs). However, they remain isolated and lack sufficient back-up at the central level. Moreover, there is as yet no capacity to effectively use the experiences that are being made for developing a national strategy for the modernization of vocational education. At the same time, at the national level attempts to formulate new vocational education policies remain limited to institutional aspects and are being blocked by the lack of resources. Policy makers should look for alternatives to the traditional "top-down" approach for educational change. A new combination of local initiatives and experimentation, on the one hand, coupled with mobilization, monitoring and dissemination at the central level, on the other, could be more realistic and effective.

We have spelled out our ideas for promoting initiatives at the local level. To avoid that such local experiences remain isolated and become unused for the modernization of the system at large, we suggest the establishment, for a limited period of time, of a **National Taskforce for Vocational Education and Training** which should have as its principal aims (a) to instigate a national debate on the future of vocational education and training, (b) to elaborate the broad orientations for the VET system, in terms of its structure, management, provision, contents, financing, and monitoring (This would also include the elaboration of a National System of Qualification Standards), and (c) to work out a strategy for the implementation of modernization measures based on accumulated local experiences.

The National Taskforce should be established by the Government, and be composed of representatives of all social partners, chaired by a person of high social prestige, but work independently of the Government or any of the specialized ministries. It should avail of a **daily professional secretariat**, and be able to **consult external experts**, both from Poland and from abroad. The National Taskforce would have to meet regularly with a **Commission of representatives of relevant ministries** in order to discuss the progress of its work.

The secretarial function could be organized by the existing Taskforce Training and Human Resources which at present coordinates foreign assistance in the field of education and training. The budget for the National Taskforce could be established from a combination of state funds, EC PHARE funds, and funds managed by the Polish Cooperation Fund.

Additional activities can be developed by the secretariat which do not involve huge sums of money but which would assist the National Taskforce in its work and would simultaneously create the necessary conditions for the development of a national awareness of the important issues as well as a policy oriented support structure:

- Collection and dissemination of information and documentation about European systems of vocational education and training and their recent developments, in close cooperation with existing national and EC institutions in this field.

- This should be accompanied by the stimulation of study visits, international contacts and meetings between different actors from VET systems, especially practitioners, researchers and policy makers. More in particular, within the framework of the Association Agreement with the European Community, Polish participation in EC programs for vocational education, including activities organized by CEDEFOP, should be promoted. However, it should be secured that the experiences and results of such exchanges be continuously evaluated for their use for the Polish VET system and are at the disposal of the National Taskforce.

- To that end, it is also necessary to reconstruct a professional and multidisciplinary Research and Development structure which can assist in the development and implementation of conceptions, contents and structures, based on experiences (methodological and substantial) achieved at the local level in Poland, but also elsewhere. Such a task could eventually initially by fulfilled by the secretariat, which could then gradually be further developed to

continue to operate as an independent research unit after the National Taskforce has terminated its activities. The secretariat would have to be able to mobilize all existing research capacities in Poland. The Government should consider the possibility of reserving research funds for the financing of research needed by the National Taskforce.

Annexes:

Outcome of the discussions with Polish Ministries and foreign donor representatives and proposals for further action (Seminars of 13 March, 13 November, and 22-24 November, 1992).

1. During the preparation of the report, extensive consultations with a wide range of experts have been held. All available policy documents from various ministries have been collected in order to have an up-to-date insight in the state of the discussions on vocational education in Poland. A full description of the Polish VET system has been included in an annex to the main report. The report itself has been extensively discussed with policymakers and experts from Poland and from abroad during three subsequent seminars.

2. A first draft version of the report was discussed at a meeting with researchers from the main institutions in Poland dealing with matters of vocational education and training. On the basis of this meeting, which was primarily aimed at testing the interpretations of Polish vocational education, corrections were made in the initial text. A second discussion took place during a seminar with representatives of all ministries and national organizations (public and private) with responsibilities for vocational education and training. A third seminar was organized with representatives from donor countries and international organizations. During this last meeting also representatives of the ministries of National Education, Industry and Trade, and Labour and Social Policy were present, as well as from the Council of Minister's Office for Coorination of Foreign Asssistance. In addition, experts from Hungary and the Slowak Republic took part.

3. In all meetings, the main philosophy and recommendations have found broad support, despite the fact that some of the specialized ministries (Health, Arts, Agriculture) have found that their particular characteristics in vocational education could have been spelled out more accurately. The Department of Vocational Education of the Ministry of National Education was of the opinion that the report should form the basis for discussions within the Government on the reform of Polish VET. The representative of the OECD stated that the conclusions from the forthcoming Polish Labour Market Review are remarkably similar to the ones reached in the report. Representatives of donor countries appreciated the plea for developing more complex activities "bottom-up" for the modernization of vocational education, and especially their linkage with employment develop-

ment. The representative of the Council of Minister's office pointed out that regional development is a priority approach and that financial resources - even inside Poland - are available.

4. The report has been especially appreciated for being the joint effort of a mixed Polish-international team of authors. This is the first report of this kind to be published in Poland. Both chapters on internal and external constraints and challenges have been found very rich in information and of great assistance in clarifying the strong continuity in the discussions among Polish educationalists up to today. At the same time, the comparative approach provides an international perspective from which those in Poland who are presently involved in discussions on educational reform have hardly been aware of. International experiences are still not very much made use of, partly as the result of their inaccessability but partly also due to problems of interpretattion and understanding. It was realized, however, that modernization of the VET system means now much more than "finally doing what we already wanted since twenty years"; the national and international context has too radically changed for that.

5. The basic assumption of the report that the modernization of the Polish VET system cannot be the result of a single administrative act, has been almost unanimously supported. There has also been general agreement with the argument that there are no single models to be copied from abroad. The reform of the VET system, the participants in the discussion agreed, has to be conceived as a collective "learning process" that should involve all principal actors and that should prefarably be based on a careful monitoring of local experiments. As a consequence, the reform would go much beyond increasing the role of particular schooltypes (and decreasing the role of others), modernization of curriculum contents and teacher training. One crucial element, as stated in the report, is to establish - especially at the present times of insecurity concerning employment development - local and regional networks of communication and cooperation between VET institutions and firms, in order to secure a truly proactive role of vocational education and to have a maximum of guarantees that the developing employment system will avail of needed qualified staff, on the one hand, and that people leaving vocational education really find employment.

6. In the course of the discussions also the plans of the Ministry of National Education to seek a World Bank loan for its policy concerning the forced development of Secondary Vocational Schools (with a limited number of broad vocational streams) and the - eventual - phasing out of the Basic Vocational Schools have been presented. Questions were raised with respect to the future

of skilled workers education in Poland, against the background of the growing awareness all around the world that modern industry and services can only develop around strong and well qualified skilled workers. An alternative reform policy could concentrate on reforming the Basic Vocational Schools, as the future core element of vocational education, rather than on Secondary Vocational Schools. Hungarian experiences, where a similra approach has been chosen should be carefully analysed.

Proposals for further action

7. In the light of the broad support which was given to the conclusions and recommendations of the report, participants in the three seminars have made a series of suggestions with respect to concrete activites that should be undertaken to further promote the conclusions of the report:

- The contents of the report should be widely disseminated in Poland among those involved in vocational education and training at all levels. Different forms and media should be used. It has been suggested to write shorter articles and to organize seminars at the regional level.

- The public awareness with respect to the importance of vocational education and training should be increased. At present, discussions are too much limited to educational administrators and teaching staff. A national discussion involving the wider public should be launched and here the proposed National Taskforce could have an important role to play.

- Simultaneously, decisionmakers in the Government should be sensibilized for the issue of vocational education and training to find high-level support for the recommendations. It has been strongly suggested to do so at the level of the Prime Minister's Office.

- Donor countries already active in the field of vocational education and training should be approached in order to see whether they could concentrate their efforts around the recommended local and regional training networks. Those donor countries who were present would take initiatives in this respect.

- Further consultations with policy makers, social partners and the academic world should lead to a clarification of the definition of the role of the proposed national Task Force for Vocational Education and Training. A conception should be elaborated as to the organizational, personal, legal and financial aspects, leading to its timely establishment.

- Concrete terms of reference for the development of Regional Training Networks should be elaborated, including terms of reference for the Development Teams, and for Regional Training Centres. These should be based on available experience from West European countries. The existence of functioning networks could greatly assist a wider mobilization of policymakers and society.

- The Polish Task Force for Training and Human Resources (BKKK) should work on an inventory of all training and employment initiatives presently existing in Poland, to provide a map plus selection criteria on the basis of which it would be possible to choose regions and locations for pilot projects. The inventory should also include a first evaluation of experiences with similar initiatives already taken (for example in Olsztyn).

- The international group of authors (eventually extended with other international experts) should remain available for further consultations during the project development, implementation and evaluation phases.

- The results of these discussions together with the suggestions for concrete follow-up activities should be reported to the G24 Meeting of 7 - 9 December in Poland.

- Close cooperation and a systematic exchange of experiences should be sought with those who are involved in modernization of vocational education and training in other Central European countries, especially Hungary and the Czech and Slowak Republics (representatives of Hungary and Slowak Republic who were present during the last seminar expressed their interest to do so).

- Close cooperation should be sought with the World Bank Programme Implementation Unit at the Ministry of National Education for maximum complementarity of actions.

- Close cooperation should be sought with those in Poland who are involved in other World Bank and Phare programmes dealing with matters of training, regional development and labour market restructuring.

- Together with Polish Aid Coordination Institutions, ways should be sought for financing some of the suggestions from future Phare programmes.

- The Polish Task Force for Training and Human Resources is asked to take responsibility for all follow-up activities, in close collaboration with the Coordination Office for Foreign Assistance.

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- *Education and careers in today's Poland.* European Cultural Foundation, Amsterdam 1983
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- with Władysław Adamski (eds.): *Youth, Education and Work in Europe.* Routledge, London and New York 1989
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Annex D

Review of the vocational education and training system in Poland
Ewa Czarnocka, Ewa Czechowicz, Wojciech Giermanowski, Jan Szczucki
Warsaw, May 1992

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The present report aims at filling a gap, resulting from the lack of updated presentations of the Polish vocational education system. It seems, that the present review is the first of its kind as far as Poland is concerned and, therefore, may by burdened with some shortcomings which, in any case, does not diminish the authors' responsibility for possible deficiencies and flaws. The present paper was written in late autumn of 1991, when rapid changes not only in education, but in the entire social and economic system took place (a good example may be the new Education Act, passed by the Parliament in September 1991). For this reason some of the information contained in the text may well soon be outdated.

The report has been based mainly on legal regulations and information supplied by educational authorities. Therefore, it is not unlikely that the factual state may differ slightly from the one described and that some schools are not fully respecting the relevant regulations.

Nevertheless, we do not know how far such an attitude is spread, since the pedagogic supervision is not always sufficiently thorough. It should be remembered, however, that the gap between legal regulations and actual facts may be relatively wide. The reason may lie, on the one hand, in the gradual annulment of old legal acts with the new regulations not yet fully adopted and, on the other, with the authorities not sufficiently strong to see them being observed.

1. Introduction

At present, the Polish educational system, just as all other areas of social life, is in the course of fundamental transformation. The sector of the system, linked with the national economy in the strongest manner is the vocational education and training (VET) system. But while the actions aiming at reforming of general educational system have recently gained speed, as exemplified by the adoption of a new Educational Act by the Parliament, the problem of reforming the VET system is far from even a partial solution.

The commencement of a large scale discussion on the reform of the VET system requires, because of the possible participation of Western experts, a detailed description of the existing system. The purpose of the present paper is to provide such description.

At the beginning it would be worthwhile to draw attention to some obstacles that may curtail the informative and diagnostic value of the report:

- difficulties in gaining access to information on VET due to dispersion of competencies as far as management of the system is concerned, both in the subject matter (i. e. division of responsibilities among various ministries) as well as territorial (i. e. supervision by curatoria in individual voivodships);

- small number of research institutions engaged in the study of VET problems; the output of the Vocational Training Institute, wound-up in 1990, is of little avail because of completely different economic conditions;

- VET administrative bodies are mainly engaged in routine procedures and solving of everyday's problems. Information is insufficiently available is the the current status of the system (number and type of operating schools and courses, mandatory legal regulations);

- some legal regulations which control the functioning of VET were established before 1989, when even essential rulings of individual ministries remained simply unpublished. This concerns mostly the sectors of vocational training not directly subordinated to the Ministry of National Education (i. e. vocational training in military units, state railways etc.).

The paper is constructed in the following manner: the first section deals with vocational training within the school system, including practical learning in various industrial plants; the next subject to be discussed is vocational training within the handicraft business. Further described will be vocational training courses, the most important element of continuous education in Poland (education of adults is fully integrated with primary education). The next topic relates to training and requalification of unemployed, with some remarks on vocational guidance. Finally, the major problems in Polish education and vocational training will be briefly discussed.

2. Vocational training within the school system

2. 1. General characteristics of the educational system

The framework of the present educational system goes back to 1961, when the last Education Act was voted by the Parliament. From then on, the types of schools as well as other basic elements of the system (except the division of competencies in administration of the system) have remained practically unchanged. Essential changes have been brought by the new Education Act from September 1991; however, as the relevant executive rulings (which apply to the majority of basic issues) will become effective only at the beginning of Septem-

ber 1992, it may be said that at present education is "suspended" between the old and new regulations.

Education in all state-owned schools in Poland (for youth and adults) have been and still is free of charge. On the other hand, fees are being paid in private schools which have been organized starting from 1989; however, as these are mostly primary and secondary general schools, so this subject will not be further discussed.

The present educational system incorporates:

- Compulsory 8-grade primary schools. Children start school at the age of 7 (or exceptionally 6) and finish at the age of 15 (or 14).

- Trade adaptation schools, intended for youth that have difficulties in finishing primary school (1 or 2 years long).

- Post-primary schools, that incorporate the following types:

a. 2 and 3 year basic vocational schools; on completion of the school leavers are qualified as skilled workers;

b. 4-5 year secondary vocational schools (technica); the leavers have to matriculate (which means full secondary education allowing to sit for university entrance exams) and are qualified as technicians;

c. 4-year combined general-vocational secondary schools (vocational lycea); the leavers have to matriculate (full secondary education) and are qualified as skilled workers;

d. 4-year general secondary schools (lycea); the leavers have to matriculate (full secondary education).

Table 1 shows the selection of further education by leavers from primary schools /1/:

Table 1. Selection of further education by leavers from initial schools

Basic vocational schools	46%
Secondary vocational schools	
Technicas and vocational lycea	25.6%
General lycea	22.8%

- High schools, although formally not within the education system (their functioning is governed by a separate act). To a small extent (no detailed figures available) these schools are also operating vocational studies; graduates are not granted a master's degree.

There are also schools that help in obtaining additional qualifications, other than acquired in previously attended schools; these include:

- 2-3 year technica after basic vocational school.

- technica after general lyceum /2/

- 1, 2 and 3-year post-secondary schools (graduates are qualified either as technicians or skilled workers).

All the above mentioned schools have their equivalents (except vocational lyceum) in education for adults. Essentially, the entire system of education for adults is managed and financed similarly as the initial education system; for that reason more consideration is given to this system in the present paper. However, its integration with initial education is one of the reasons for its underdevelopment and inadequate performance.

2.2. Organization of vocational education

Because of administrative relat ions, the vocational schools (i. e. technicas, vocational lycea and basic vocational schools) may be divided into three categories.

a. So called "youth schools", operated and supervised by curatoria, i. e. representations of the Ministry of National Education at individual voivodships. This does not concern the applied arts, medical nor agricultural schools which are subordinated, respectively, to the Ministry of Culture and Art, Ministry of Health and Welfare and Ministry of Agriculture and Food Economy, acting in a similar role as the Ministry of National Education.

b. Schools operated by state-owned production plants. Supervision over these schools is exercised by curatoria (except of schools discussed under "c").

c. Schools, training in specific occupations, which are submitted to supervision of the relevant ministries, with rather insignificant involvement of curatoria. /3/

Also quite a number of young people are trained in job adaptation courses. These are short courses (usually from 6 months to 1 year), operated by production plants; the status of pupils is that of juvenile workers (the topic is discussed further in the text).

Another group of young people are trained within the handicraft business, to obtain vocational certificates equivalent to the category of skilled worker. Because of the complicated nature of this system, the topic will be discussed at length in section 3.

All pupils that are learning general subjects at school receive practical training either in school workshops or in enterprises contracted by the school for that purpose, when there are no such workshops in the school.

A very serious problem has recently appeared in schools supervised by curatoria (i. e. "youth schools"): the schools are claiming that they are not longer in the position to finance their workshops. These workshops had a status of "subsidiary enterprise" and were operated on a self-financing principle. Until recently, the majority of workshops managed to survive by the selling of manufactured products or by rendering relevant services; only the wages of teachers were paid from outside sources. At present, with the progressing recession, there is no demand for the school workshop products; on the other hand, there is no legal possibility for subsidizing the workshops. Although new legal regulations are being prepared, it may happen that they come too late - there are already instances where, because of bankruptcy of school workshops, the practical vocational training has acquired a purely theoretical nature.

Pedagogical supervision (i. e. control of implementation of curriculum, appraisal of teachers etc.) over schools, listed under "a" and "b", is exercised by curatoria. Supervision over schools, mentioned under "c", is exercised by persons employed by the respective ministries with some involvement by the curatorium, except for the Ministry of National Defence and the Ministry of Internal Affairs, where the supervision is in the hands of the relevant department (also with some involvement of curatoria).

The basic competencies (such as nominating or recalling of head-master, staff matters etc.) are in the hands of:

- for schools under "a": curatorium (or the relevant ministry in conjunction with curatorium);
- for schools under "b": curatorium;
- for schools under "c": the relevant ministry in conjunction with curatorium.

A separate problem is the matter of curricula. The curricula for general subjects in all types of schools are defined by the Ministry of National Education. Also the same ministry decides about the teaching schedules and about the number of hours assigned for various types of subjects (general, general-vocational, specific-vocational). Much more complicated is the procedure for developing of vocational curricula. According to the ruling on classification of occupations (the issue itself, is discussed in the annex), responsible for curricula for individual occupations and skills are the relevant ministries (or central authorities), to whom the mentioned occupations and skills are subordinated. These curricula are drawn and modified by special committees operating at each of the ministries; their decisions have to be approved by the Ministry of National Education, however.

2.3. Financing of vocational education

Vocational education is financed in a rather complicated manner.

All teachers (except instructors of practical training) are financed from the state budget (via the budget of the Ministry of National Education). Also the expenditures of schools, operated by curatoria and ministries other than the Ministry of National Education, are covered from the state budget.

Vocational schools operated by industrial plants are financed in a different manner. Except for the wages of teachers, they are not financed from the state budget. All expenditures for maintaining of schools are booked on the debit side. The enterprises that are operating such schools are entitled to income tax reduction amounting to 25% of the product of the number of pupils times the average pupil upkeep costs /5/.

2.4. Status of juvenile workers and pupils

The "youth schools" and schools operated by industrial plants differ basically from each other, as far as the pupil status is concerned. The pupils in "youth schools" are (in the sense of their legal status) pupils, in the full meaning of that word. They are trained in the school workshops, or in industrial plants, against collective labor contract drawn between the school and the industrial plant, or another school which operates a relevant workshop. For practical training in a school workshop or industrial plant contracted by the school for that purpose, the pupils are granted a so called financial compensation. In the school year 1990/91 this compensation (depending on the year of vocational training) amounted to 9%, 12% or 15% of the average wage (while assuming the average monthly working time as equal to 178 hours) in the 6 basic sectors of national economy in the last quarter of the year.

Pupils, however, in schools operated by industrial plants are considered as employees (being subordinated to the Labor Code and having, therefore, the status of juvenile workers), who draw individual contracts with the plant for the practical learning of a trade. For their work they are paid (depending on the subsequent year of work) at a rate of 9%, 12% or 15% of the average wage in the national economy /7/.

The essential difference lies in the fact, that juvenile workers are very often granted additional benefits (bonuses, allowances in kind), which makes their financial position much more attractive.

The wages of pupils (equivalent) as well as juvenile workers are reimbursed to production plants from the Labor Fund. Also bonuses and allowances for juvenile workers are reimbursed from the same Fund.

The Labor Fund was established in 1990 for helping in fighting unemployment; it originates from a 2% tax imposed on the wages fund. The Labor Fund is administered by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy.

As seen from the above, there is a distinct difference between the financial position of juvenile workers and pupils, which cannot be logically explained. Pupils, who are not juvenile workers, are granted a compensation corresponding to the number of worked hours; this compensation is much smaller than the wages of juvenile workers, although both of them are following the same curriculum in practical and theoretical learning of the trade. In addition, juvenile workers have the vocational training time added to their years of service, while pupils are deprived of such privilege.

The Ministry of National Education proposes that this dualism in vocational training of youth be removed, as being socially unfair. At the same time the Ministry suggests to waive the existing principle of providing young people with permanent cash benefits in the form of wages or compensations and to establish sound grounds permitting for favoring good and very good achievements in vocational training (possibly in the form of money rewards and other forms of material assistance, reimbursed from the Labor Fund).

Many teachers think, however, that the means from the Labor Found, assigned for reimbursement of wages and compensations, should be allocated for the needs of vocational schools (modernization, changes, extension of educational base). In the opinion of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, the proposals of the Ministry of National Education raise numerous doubts. The following arguments are used against the changes proposed by the Ministry of National Education:

- similar forms are functioning in many countries and not being contested;
- depriving the juveniles, trained in production plants, of the right for drawing of wages may result in loss of interest for training in some occupations, required by the national economy;
- in Poland, vocational training is also pursued in handicraft workshops, where it would be very difficult to replace it with other forms;
- because of the winding-up of many schools operated by production plants and in view of the diminishing interest of enterprises for organizing of practical vocational training, the proposal of the Ministry of National Education is practically not realistic, especially in the present deep recession.

Because of the unstable situation, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy feels that standardization of the juvenile status should be postponed until new economic structures have become consolidated.

2.5. Teachers working in vocational education

By December 31, 1990 there were 141,363 teachers employed in vocational education, of whom 97,029 teachers were working full time /8/. In 1989 the respective figures were 135,168 and 90,231. Relative to 1989, the number of teachers in 1990 increased by 4.6%. The increase of the number of full-time teachers results from the taking over by curatoria of schools operated previously by industrial plants. In the latter, the "teachers engaged in practical vocational

tuition" (instructors) are paid by the enterprise. As soon as such a school is taken over by the curatorium, the teachers commence to be paid from the curatorium funds.

In Poland there is one wage scale for all teachers employed in state-owned schools. The earnings of teachers depend on the level of education, pedagogical qualifications, working time, degree of specialization (3 degrees) and function (functional benefit). In the public opinion the teachers are the lowest paid professional group. For years this has been one of the major causes for the depreciation of the teacher profession. It has resulted in the outflow of men and in a extensive feminization of the profession.

In vocational education the teachers are divided into the following groups:

- those teaching general subjects;
- those teaching theoretical vocational subjects;
- those teaching practical vocational subjects.

Practical vocational training is also pursued outside the school workshops. Depending on the actual place, i. e. in production plants or handicraft workshops, it is conducted by instructors or craftsmen.

The teachers of general subjects in vocational schools are learning their profession in universities, higher pedagogical schools, pedagogical lycea and pedagogical schools (post-secondary 2-year studies). This group of teachers amounts to 40% of the total educational staff in vocational schools.

In the majority of cases the teachers of theoretical vocational subjects are university graduates in the given subject, but are lacking vocational practice. Some of the teachers in this group are also lacking pedagogical qualifications.

Teachers of practical vocational training are educated in the Pedagogical Technical Studies system. This system includes either 4-year schools to be entered after basic vocational school in specific occupations or 2-year schools after a 4-year technical lyceum in other occupations. A practical vocation teacher may also be a matriculated graduate of a technicum after 2 years of work in the industry, or a person with a senior-craftsman certificate and 6 year practice in the industry (this may be a person who has not finished a technicum, i. e. with lower than secondary education). The practical vocation teachers are involved in teachers upgrading procedures, but only in terms of their pedagogical prepara-

tion. There are no effective forms of upgrading such teachers in practical vocation training, adapted to the specific nature of that group of teachers.

Until the end of 1990, the Teachers Upgrading Center was organizing in its branch sections 1-year pedagogical studies for practical vocation teachers /8/ . Now these studies will be organized by high schools (university level), such as the Higher Engineering School in Radom or Higher Pedagogical School in Bydgoszcz. They will be still conducted within the frames of Pedagogical Technical Studies and operated by Regional Methodical Centers, established by curatoria.

Instructors of practical vocational training in production plants are directly employed by the plants; they are not teachers in the strict meaning of the word. Professional and pedagogical qualifications of instructors are defined by the Minister of National Education. In 1989 the instructors were entitled to some privileges contained in the Teacher's Charter. Any person holding a senior craftsman certificate and after completion of a pedagogical course (140 hours) may become an instructor in schools operated by production plants.

Students of non-pedagogical faculties may gain, additionally, pedagogical qualifications while studying by attending the Interfaculty Pedagogical Studies (4 semesters); such opportunities are also available after graduation, even when working in a school (evening school system). Only educational institutions of university standing are entitled to operate pedagogical studies.

According to EWIKAN, the percentage of university graduate teachers working full-time in vocational schools was lower than in secondary general schools (see Table 2.).

Table 2. Teachers holding higher education degrees

Basic vocational schools	69.9%
Secondary and tertiary vocational schools	89.8%
Secondary general schools	97.7%

The number of instructors in basic vocational schools amounted to 1948 persons, while the respective employment in secondary and tertiary vocational schools amounted to 197 persons (see Table 3.).

Table 3. Practical instructors holding higher education degree

Basic vocational schools	4.8%
Secondary and tertiary vocational schools	19.8%

The majority of full-time and part-time teachers, working in vocational schools, have pedagogical qualifications (see Table 4.).

Table 4. Teachers with pedagogical qualifications

Basic vocational schools	85.3%
Secondary and tertiary vocational schools	85.8%
Secondary general schools	96.9%

Polish education is noted for its high degree of feminization (see table 5.).

Table 5. Share of women among teachers

Primary schools	83.2%
Secondary general schools	68.8%
Secondary and tertiary vocational schools	58.5%
Basic vocational schools	45.3%

2.6. History of reforms

Many attempts have already been made to reform the vocational education and training system in Poland; the most important ones are briefly discussed below.

2.6.1. History of reforms - former attempts

Since 1961 (the year in which the Education Development Act was enforced) there were two major attempts of reforming the system based on reports, drawn by National Committees that were established by governmental decisions.

Some experts participated in both Committees. Many people consider the first report, drawn by the Committee headed by prof. Jan Szczepa ski /9'/, as much better than the other. The first report was presented in 1973, at the beginning of the Gierek administration decade. It should be noted, that the critical part of the report could well have been written in 1989, since the drawbacks of the Polish

education system have remained relatively stable throughout the years. The authors of the report put particular stress on the following problems of the education system, in particular where vocational education is concerned:

- low quality of some schools, especially agricultural schools;
- inadequacy of educational profiles for the needs of the economy;
- premature and incorrect selection of candidates;
- habitual approach to pupils as cheap labor.

The authors also pointed at the low quality of education as well as the poor organization of education and upgrading of teachers.

The Committee presented 4 versions of a proposed structure of education system. In the Committee's opinion, the most appropriate version incorporated the following elements:

- 11-year general school, invalidating of matriculation and its replacement by an ordinary school termination certificate;
- vocational schools and courses, from 1/2 to 2 years (for persons that would not pursue university education);
- higher education to be divided into vocational education for technicians and university education for persons to graduate with a master's degree.

Education for the 3 last years in the 11-year general school would be organized along 4 lines (mathematics-physics-technical sciences, chemistry-biology-agriculture, socio-economic sciences, arts). All pupils, on finishing the 8th grade, would have to select the line of further education. In the authors' opinion all teachers should graduate with a master's degree.

The second (and last) report on the Polish education system was drawn up /9"'/ by the Committee headed by prof. Czeslaw Kupisiewicz. The Committee was established in 1987 by a decision of the Council of Ministers; it presented its final report in 1989. However, the report was rejected by the new leaders in the Ministry of National Education and the relevant conclusions were suspended.

As far as vocational education is concerned, the critical opinions were directed upon:

- the existence of narrow educational profiles;
- incorrect and inadequate general education curricula for vocational schools;
- obsolete equipment in school workshops;
- relatively high costs of vocational education.

The main conclusions of the report were as follows:

- in a short time the number of leavers from primary schools, who select general schools for further education, should be doubled, attaining 35-40% by the end of 1995;
- vocational schools should be closer linked with enterprises;
- outlays from the state budget for the needs of educations should be increased by 7%.

The appraisal of the reports has not been univocal. Nevertheless, the critical part of the reports is still timely. It should also be stressed that only a very small part of the relevant conclusions has been implemented.

2.6.2. Initial conception for the development of vocational education

In August 1990, the Minister of National Education constituted a Committee (so called Radziwil Committee, after Anna Radziwil, at the time the Vice Minister of National Education responsible for vocational education), with the task to elaborate a conception for reforming the vocational education system. In November 1990 the draft "Initial conception for the development of vocational education" was completed. The main conclusion of the report were as follows:

- an effective vocational guidance system, indispensable in a market economy, should be established;
- the education system should lead to universality of secondary education;
- the vocational education and training system should prepare the leavers for work under conditions of hard competition and perpetual changes;
- the vocational education and training system should ensure horizontal mobility, at least during the 2 first semesters in post-primary schools;
- the curricula should put more stress on foreign languages.

The Committee proposed 2 versions for structuring the education and vocational training system, one more and one less radical.

Version I (less radical):

- 8 years of compulsory education in primary school;
- one of the following types of post-primary schools:
  - *2 or 3 year basic vocational school
  - *4 year secondary general school
  - *4 year secondary vocational school
- 2 or 3 year tertiary schools (granting the degree of technician).

This version resembles, to some extent, the present shape of the system. The difference consists in the fact that the proposed system included only 3 types of post-primary schools (instead of 4 as today) and that it transferred the possibility of obtaining the degree of technician from secondary to tertiary level.

Version II (more radical):

- 7 year compulsory primary school;
- 2 year grammar school;
- one of the following types of post-primary schools:
  - *1 or 2 year basic vocational school
  - *4 year secondary vocational school
  - *3 year vocational lyceum
  - *3 year general lyceum

The Ministry of National Education decided to send-out the report to various institutions, asking for their critical pinions. The approached institutions, and also individual persons, laid stress on the following issues:

- mechanisms should be established that would make the enterprises to participate more actively in vocational training;

- the formal status of school workshops should be changed, converting them from production-type enterprises into non-profitable institutionsto be financed from the state budget (or local budget);

- the report does not clarify the exceptionally difficult problem of financing the education and vocational training system; the present system is rather ambiguous and the development of a new one is most pressing;

- the report does not present a clear conception of vocational guidance;

- more attention should be paid to strengthening of links between vocational schools and enterprises;

- a requalification system (mainly for the unemployed) should be developed in the shortest possible time;

- in every school at least one teacher-vocational consultant should be employed.

The majority of respondents expressed their preference for the more radical version II. However, the Ministry of National Education rejected this idea, mainly because of shortage of funds required for its implementation.

2.6.3. New act on the education system

The new Education Act, voted by the Parliament and mandatory from September 1991, has brought a number of changes in the management of the education system.

According to the Act, schools are divided into 3 categories:

- state schools, free and meeting the curricula-wise stipulations, defined by the Ministry of National Education;
- schools with prerogatives of a state school, meeting some of the above stipulations;
- other schools.

Both state schools and non-state sc hools may be operated virtually by any one i. e. by natural or legal persons, having full legal ability.

All state schools, either under the ministries or local (gmina) administration, are financed from the state budget. Other state schools are granted subsidies for each pupil; the subsidy equals to average outlays for one student in schools administrated by ministries and local authorities (gminas). Non-state schools, having the prerogatives of state schools, are also to be subsidized, but the subsidy will amount to 50% with respect to the schools mentioned above.

The Act defines the types of vocational schools in a rather general way: it does not specify the time of tuition, relaying that problem to general education plans established by the Ministry of National Education. The Act stipulates compulsory education from the age of 7 until completion of primary school, but not longer than to 17 years. Nevertheless, the Council of Ministers may, in a given voivodship or its part, extend the compulsory general or vocational education for young people up to 18 years of age /10/.

In the case of vocational education the Act anticipates the participation of the respective ministries in the management procedures, i. e. establishing of vocational curricula, education plans, textbooks etc. The mentioned ministries will also be entitled to supervision over the tuition of vocational subjects. The details about division of competencies will be defined by the ruling of the Council of Ministers.

The Act entitles also the vocational school headmaster, while acting in agreement with the superior authority and the regional employment office, to change or to introduce new vocational training profiles.

The Act anticipates the possibility of charging for tuition by vocational upgrading centers and other continuous training institutions for adults.

The principles of organizing and financing the practical vocation training are mentioned to be regulated by a relevant ruling of the Council of Ministers.

The Act also anticipates to exempt all state schools from taxes.

2.7. Appraisal of present status of vocational education and its position in public opinion

The quality of vocational education has always been differentiated, although valid scientific information is not available. It seems that a distinct line has to be drawn between the technica, which have always enjoyed a high opinion, and basic vocational schools of rather lower estimation. Also vocational lycea, combining the curricula of general lyceum and basic vocational school, have been rated lower. The reason for their instituting in the early 1970s was the idea to obtain skilled workers with higher levels of general education. As a result, a quasi general lyceum of second grade was established for persons that failed to enter a standard general lycea. However, the youth that intended to work as skilled workers have not, generally, selected this type of school since this would prolong their time of education (compared to basic vocational school) by 1 year, solely compensated by matriculation, which would not offer any practical advantages.

As far as the problem of pupils having difficulties with passing to a next grade is concerned, it is evident that their percentage is higher in vocational schools, than in other types of schools. While in general lycea this index amounts to 2.9%, in vocational technica and lycea it reaches 3.8% and in basic vocational schools even 4.9%.

Education in technical schools has always been, for obvious reasons, more expensive than in general schools. Unfortunately, it is not possible to compare the actual costs of education in different types of schools. The reason lies, before all, in the fact that financing of schools from the state budget is effected via curatoria, located in every voivodship. Curatoria are using very different methods of calculating costs. For instance, in the case of general lycea, the differentiation of costs (converted to one pupil) among individual voivodships has reached 300%, while this fact could have not been justified by specific regional conditions. So until a clear education financing system has been developed, all considerations must be purely hypothetical.

In turn, it is practically impossible to define the position of vocational education in the eyes of public opinion given the lack of information on the perception of various types of schools by parents and pupils. Formerly, the perception was greatly limited to two patterns: on the one side it was an education with lower prestige (particularly basic vocational schools) than general education while hindering (or, in some cases, even preventing) the access to higher levels in the social hierarchy. On the other hand, especially for parents and children from workers' families, a very important issue was the fact that a certificate from a vocational school gave the chance for immediate employment, quicker earnings and gaining of independence. At present, these trends are beginning to change because of the spreading unemployment; as a result, the chances of leavers from various vocational schools are unevenly distributed on the labor market, the latter being strongly dependent on regional factors.

Another interesting question is the effectiveness of vocational education, i. e. the proportion of school leavers working in the mastered occupation. Again, there are no precise figures available. Very rough estimations, from before 1989, indicate that approximately 40% of school leavers were employed inconsistently with their qualifications /11/. The figures of unemployed school leavers and graduates, quoted in Section 5, relate to large occupational groups (e. g. figures for different types of technicians in engineering occupations are given jointly); it is probable that some leavers and graduates have registered as unemployed for a short time, just to draw the dole.

It is also difficult to form a precise opinion about the feasibility of individual vocational education. Indeed, very rapid changes may be observed in that area. In any case the education in vocational schools, from the material point of view (the prestige issue has already been discussed) and the resultant employment have proved most certainly generally worth while. This has been particularly true with regard to some basic vocational schools (e. g. mining) as well as technica and tertiary schools (highly demanded have always been the graduates from tertiary Schools of Languages and Shorthand Typists).

Very scarce are also investigations concerning the fate of school leavers. For what we know, some research work in that area is being carried out, but the results are not yet available. It seems, that a hard time with finding of work are having the leavers from economic lycea. Despite the very promising name, these schools were essentially engaged in production of bureaucrats for the needs of the planned economy; hence there are serious problems in changing of their curricula.

2.8. Basic problems and countermeasures

When considering the trends in reforming of the vocational education system, the following basic problems should be pointed out .

a. A thorough change of organizational structure of the vocational education system in order to make it compatible to the market economy needs. For many years it has been argued that basic vocational schools in their present shape should be done away with, as not granting a secondary school certificate (and thus forming a dead-end street of education) and mostly training in very narrow profiles. The reformed system should improve the possibilities for transfer from one type of school to another and provide the leavers of technical schools with every opportunity for requalification, if necessary. This calls for reforming of curricula which should be of wider profiles (this is obviously connected with an invertible change of classification of occupations), should possibly include elements for learning of two occupations and finally should contain general guidance for behavior on the labor market.

b. A lack of more or less precise proposals for the reform of the system. It seems that the present shape of the system and its trend of evolution depend, to a very large extent, on the following factors:

- the economic situation, behavior of enterprises and employers in general;
- poor coordination of immediate actions between the ministries;
- actions of individual actors involved in functioning of vocational education (pupils, teachers, local authorities), aiming at survival and, very often, contradictory with each other;
- current reforming of the entire education system (partially linked with the new Education Act) which, naturally, applies also to vocational education.

The result is a spontaneity of changes presently taking place. There is nothing wrong with that by itself; however, much seems to indicate that in the longer run these changes may become dysfunctional both for the economic as well as the educational system. It seems that this fact is now being perceived by the ministries involved in the vocational education system, i. e. the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy. They intend, in the nearest future, to lodge a proposal with the Council of Ministers for establishing a Commission for Vocational and Continuous Education at the government level. The Commission should incorporate representatives of 7

ministries /12/, involved with vocational education. The Commission would fulfil coordinating functions, what seems purposeful and what could improve the efficiency of actions by the government as a whole. It is anticipated that in the future there will be a separate section formed at the Commission, engaged also in the development of a conception of the reform in question. However, the constituting of such section depends on financial possibilities of the state budget, which is presently in a very poor condition and with very remote chances for improvement.

A source of some anxiety may be the fact that a number of supporters of the idea in question seem to consider the Commission as a general remedy for all the maladies in the vocational education system. Such a magic trend in thinking may result in forbearing (or slowing down) by the relevant ministries of work upon the reform of vocational education and training system.

c. The outlining of a cohesive financial system for vocational education is of utmost importance. An attempt to minimizing expenditures from the state budget with simultaneous raising of interest of enterprises and handicraft business in vocational training of young people seems to be the basic goal of such a system. However, the work on such a system would require active participation of the Ministry of Finances which, unfortunately, does not seem disposed to planning of long-term trends, concentrating most of its efforts on saving the state budget

3. Practical vocational training within the handicraft business

3.1. Training system in handicraft business

In Poland, the handicraft workshops provide a substantial base for vocational training (12). At present, about 105,000 young people are learning various occupations in approximately 50,000 handicraft workshops. It is, however, estimated that the actual potential of handicraft business permits for vocational training of even 200,000 persons. There are about 100,000 pedagogically and professionally prepared instructors in handicraft business. The training is in the hands of persons holding senior-craftsman or equivalent certificates, with a pedagogical background. Handicraft organizations are also engaged in vocational guidance and publishing of a wide range of popular-professional literature such as directories, curricula for vocational training, lecture notes and handbooks.

Vocational training in the handicraft business is accessible to:

- Young people, within 16-18 years of age, who combine theoretical tuition in schools with practical vocational training in handicraft workshops. The education lasts for 3 years and is terminated by a junior-craftsman examination before the examination board, appointed by the Chamber of Handicrafts. The legal status of so called "pupils" in handicraft workshops is exactly the same as of juvenile workers. It means that they are employed against individual employment contracts for acquiring an occupation. The contract is concluded between the juvenile trainee and the owner of the handicraft workshop.

- Adults, wishing to gain vocational qualifications or improve their skills on courses run by the Handicraft Association. Vocational training of adults in handicraft workshops is governed by rulings of the Board of the Polish Handicraft Association, issued on the basis of the Handicraft Act of March 22 1989. Vocational qualifications may be gained in the form of acquiring the handicraft skills or training for a specific job. Vocational training takes 2 years and prepares for junior-craftsman examination. It consists of practical training in the workshop as well as theoretical backing in relevant courses. The handicraft workshop draws an employment contract with the trainee, with the purpose of vocational preparation. The specific job-training takes 3 to 6 months. Certificates stating the specific job training period and the acquired skills are issued by handicraft workshops.

Until 1991 the handicraft training was conducted on the basis of practical vocational curricula, established by the Board of the Polish Handicraft Association. There was a scheme of specific occupations that could be included in the handicraft training. The Handicraft Association was responsible for 16 vocational groups which contained 141 occupations (status by August 17, 1991).

3.2. Examination system in the handicraft training scheme

Examination boards for junior-craftsman and senior-craftsman examinations are appointed and recalled by the respective body in the Chamber of Handicrafts. Members of such boards may by selected out of senior-craftsmen in the given or related occupation as well as from engineers and technicians of similar professions. Generally, examination boards consist of 5-6 members, including always a representative of the educational authority or organization that has been running the training course as well as a representative of the Chamber of Handicrafts. The Chamber allows any person to sit for junior-craftsman examination, who completed vocational training within the handicraft training scheme or has sufficient practice in the occupation and who gained the required theoretical knowledge by attending the relevant course(s).

The Chamber of Handicrafts permits to sit for senior-craftsman examination any person, holding a junior-craftsman certificate (or other equivalent document stating proper qualifications in the given occupation) as well as evidence for working and improving skills for at least 6 years. Permitted for sitting for the craftsman examination may also be persons who - when not holding a junior-craftsman or equivalent certificate - can prove that they have independently worked in the given craft for at least 6 years. Both the junior as well as senior-craftsman examination include theoretical and practical subjects. Practical examinations consist in unaided completion of a craftsman's job. Theoretical examinations are held in oral and written form. The written examinations include such subjects as simple accountancy (for senior-craftsmen complete with calculation), business correspondence and technical drawings (in those occupations where it is necessary). Oral examinations include the following topics:

- at junior-craftsman level: production methods, theory of machines, materials technology, work safety rules, fire preventive and fighting procedures as well as basic labor code;

- at senior-craftsman level: production methods, theory of machines, materials technology, work safety rules, fire-preventive and fighting procedures, basic labor code, basic vocational training rules, basic knowledge of psychology and vocational didactics, understanding of social and economic situation.

There are over 1100 examination boards in Poland, organized and fully financed by 26 Chambers of Handicrafts. These boards incorporate about 7000 persons. The senior and junior-craftsman certificates, granted by the mentioned examination boards, are highly appreciated and recognized in foreign countries. Every year 40-50 thousand of such certificates are issued.

3.3. Financing and proposed changes

Vocational training in handicraft workshops is fully financed by the craftsmen. This means that the state is not burdened with costs of organization of the training, establishing and equipping of training places, supply of materials and aids, wages and social security. Craftsmen, who are engaged in training of young workers, are partially exempted from income and turnover taxes. Higher tax reductions are granted for greater number of trainees, for training in occupations much demanded in the market and in rural areas.

In the craftsmen opinion the mentioned reductions do not compensate the ever growing costs of vocational training (wages, social security, materials, protective clothing etc.). This results in loss of interest for vocational training by owners of

handicraft workshops. The craftsmen propose also other changes, consisting mainly in altering the proportion between practical and theoretical studies in vocational education, by allowing more time for the practical side.

Another perceived problem is the striving of the Ministry of National Education for concentrating all the responsibility for vocational education in its hands. This trend has been recognized by the Polish Handicraft Association as highly disadvantageous as far as the training effectiveness is concerned. Very strongly requested is the annulment of the ruling which calls for refunding of educational costs by the craftsmen, who employ in their workshops technical school graduates. Yet another issue, protested by Polish craftsmen, is the annulment of the ruling which stipulated that all owners of handicraft workshops should hold appropriate professional certificates.

Additionally to the above mentioned stipulations, the Economic Activity Act of December 23 1988 overruled also the compulsory association requirement. The relevant enactment has resulted in the loss of control by Chambers of Handicrafts over the qualification level of craftsmen as well as the quality of production and services rendered; as a result, quite a number of handicraft workshops remain, at present, outside the statistics of the Chambers.

4. Non-school based vocational training - vocational courses

4.1. Legal regulations

Up till October 25, 1991 it was compulsory to obtain a license from the Ministry of National Education for providing vocational courses. Such licenses were granted by the Continuous Education Department on the basis of the Education Act of July 15, 1961 and the ruling of February 26, 1965 by the Minister of Education, which defined the principles and conditions for operating other than state-owned schools and educational institutions.

The granted licenses permitted for the relevant activities to be performed either in the entire country, or in one or several voivodships, or in only one selected town; they could be issued for 1 year or for an unlimited period of time.

The organization that had been granted the license was obliged to:

- prepare curricula and training plans;
- provide teaching staff with adequate professional and pedagogical qualifications;
- provide proper supervision;

- provide the premises and appropriate aids as necessary for attaining the predetermined goals;
- satisfy the conditions required for launching of the given training course, if established against other rulings.

The establishing of such institution required the approval of a local curator who, later on, would be given a supervisory task. The permit for operation of courses could be withdrawn or limited if the relevant conditions were not fully met, if the mandatory rulings and stipulations of educational authorities were violated, if the educational level or care over the students were unsatisfactory or when further existence of the institution "would not be justified either by social or economic reasons".

Exempted from permits granted by the Ministry of National Education have been:

- all courses organized and operated by embassies;
- all courses organized and operated by schools;
- some internal courses intended for training of own personnel, e. g. in work safety procedures;
- some generally accessible courses under the auspices of individual ministries, such as driving courses submitted to the Ministry of Transportation or massage courses submitted to the Ministry of Health and Welfare;
- courses of another type (e. g. beauty, dance etc.)

The new Education Act overruled the obligation for applying to the Ministry of National Education for licenses for vocational courses. Starting from October 25, 1991 such licenses have been granted by local curatoria. Right now the Ministry of National Education is considering the possibility of establishing a register of institutions engaged in the provision of of vocational courses. However, it is not anticipated in the nearest future to collect any public statistics with information about the institutions engaged in vocational training (number of institutions, number of participants, number of persons completing the courses, type of courses etc), nor to proceed with relevant research work; under such circumstances the extent of training in non-school based courses will be a "great unknown".

4.2. Course providing institutions

The existing list of institutions entitled to non-school based educational activities shows, that by December 31, 1989, there were 488 institutions issued with the relevant licenses (out of which 148 institutions were permitted to act within the entire country; the remaining were limited to single towns or voivodships) /13/.

Since 1990, the trend for providing non-school based courses has been rapidly developing. There were about 700 licenses granted in that year to new institutions, while from January till the end of June 1991 the number of licenses granted amounted to 750. Unknown, however, is the number of institutions engaged in the process; some of them, that had obtained licenses, may not any longer undertake any activity, may have stopped or may have changed their line of activity.

In 1991 about 75% of all newly registered institutions were given licenses for courses of foreign languages - mainly English. Other very popular subjects included computer techniques, programming and business management.

Almost 30% of newly created institutions were registered in Warsaw; quite a number were established in Wroclaw, Gdansk, Katowice and Lódz. The worst situation, in this respect, is in the eastern part of Poland were much fewer applications for course licenses were submitted.

A quickly growing number of courses and further expansion results, above all, from the new situation on the labor market where the demand for new qualifications, vocational upgrading and knowledge of foreign languages has become more than evident.

Among many institutions engaged in vocational courses (exact number not known) one can metion the following, each of them of long standing tradition and with a country-wide range: Association of Vocational Upgrading Institutions (Zwiazek Zakladów Doskonalenia Zawodowego, ZZDZ), Central Handicraft Association (Centralny Zwiazek Rzemiosla), General Technical Organization (Naczelna Organizacja Techniczna, NOT), Country-wide Cooperative EDUCATION (Krajowa Spóldzielnia Pracy OSWIATA), Polish Accountants Association (Stowarzyszenie Ksiegowych w Polsce), Polish Educational Workers Association (Stowarzyszenie Oswiatowców Polskich), Scientific Society for Organization and Management (Towarzystwo Naukowe Organizacji i Kierowania, TNOiK), Popular Knowledge Society (Towarzystwo Wiedzy Powszechnej), Polish Open University Society (Towarzystwo Wolnej Wszechnicy Polskiej), and the Polish Stenographers and Typists Association (Stowarzyszenie Stenografów i Maszynistek w Polsce).

The largest organization engaged in vocational training courses is the Association of Vocational Upgrading Institutions (ZZDZ). In 1990 more than 50% of all courses in Poland were operated by ZZDZ. At present, the Association is modernizing and updating the forms and methods of training and is organizing new types of courses, in accordance with public demand. The courses include

such topics as business management, running of small business, banking, computer techniques, foreign languages and secretary-assistant courses. ZZDZ is organizing courses in 350 occupations and skills; there are about 700,000 persons attending in total 21,000 courses yearly. The Association is grouping highly qualified pedagogical staff, backed by a wide educational base. Vocational training centers and filial institutions are present in all towns with more than 10,000 inhabitants. In total over 20,000 teachers and instructors are employed.

4.3. Participants of vocational courses

At present, there is no information system in Poland related to the types and scope of vocational courses, number of participants and effectiveness of training (number of persons completing the courses, examinations passed and certificates granted). No statistics in this area were prepared by the Central Statistical Office until 1990 when it was decided, for the first time, to collect information about vocational training courses. The relevant investigations covered only the institutions licensed to act over the entire country, as registered with the Ministry of National Education (however, the largest institution, the Association of Vocational Upgrading Institutions, was not taken into consideration). Questionnaires were sent-out to 200 institutions engaged in vocational training, i. e. to all organizations named by the Ministry. It appeared, that about 30% of the licensed institutions are not any more engaged in vocational training or are even not existing any more.

The investigations by the Central Statistical Office showed that in 1990 there were 15,514 courses in Poland; 471,000 persons attended the courses and 357,000 completed them. The courses were divided into vocational courses, foreign language courses and others. Vocational courses included those aiming at: mastering of an occupation, authorizing to exercise the occupation, granting vocational certificates, upgrading in occupation, instructing in work safety and fire fighting procedures etc. In total there were 12,002 such courses, with 339,036 persons attending and 315,919 persons completing the courses. Most popular were the courses for upgrading in occupation (3203 courses) and mastering of occupation (2970 courses).

Language courses, 4527 in all, included: English (3529), German (857), French (90), Russian (4) and others (47). Relative to the number of starters (92,714 persons) the number of persons that completed the courses was rather low - 41,095 persons. Other types of courses (985) included: pedagogical, preparing for university entry examinations, preparing for external examinations etc.

These figures should be supplemented by courses provided by the Association of Vocational Upgrading Institutions, where about 700,000 persons were trained yearly on 21,000 courses.

As seen from the 1990 figures, the number of persons requalifying or upgrading in occupation exceeded 1 million persons. Actually, this number must be much higher, when considering the vocational training by local institutions and by institutions exempted from licensing by the Ministry of National Education.

The department in the Central Statistical Office, responsible for statistical information on vocational courses, is not planning a second research in this area. It is anticipated to collect the respective information by surveying households, to determine the number of household members participating in training on vocational courses. However, these findings will differ from those obtained in 1990. This means that the vocational course activities will still remain outside the state statistics. Thus, the acquisition of collective information for Poland in this area will practically be impossible for the following reasons: (a) First, because of the avalanche of newly created institutions concerned with vocational training. Quite many of them remain in operation only for a short time, to fall out of business or to change the line of activities. (b) Secondly, because of overruling the requirement for obtaining licenses from the Ministry of National Education for operating vocational courses. (c) Thirdly, because of not imputing the state statistics with information on institutions engaged in Vocational Training (number of persons participating and completing the courses, type of courses etc.).

4.4. Obtaining of vocational certificates and payment for courses

All persons, on termination of the given course, are issued with the respective certificates. In many cases the mere participation in the course is not sufficient for obtaining of such a document, but its issuing is conditioned by passing an internal examination. Depending on the type of course, the examination may be of practical or theoretical nature, or a combination.

On completion of courses the participants pass examinations before examination boards that are granting the relevant certificates, depending on the type of course. In the case of courses taking place in the enterprise there will be local specialists sitting in the examination board.

The following types of vocational courses can be distinguished: /14/

1. Qualification courses: with the purpose of preparing participants to sit examinations for skilled worker, junior craftsman, senior craftsman and for other

examinations that will result in issuing of skill certificates such as welder, central heating stoker, tractor driver etc. The duration of courses varies, usually from 250 to 400 hours, depending on the subject. Vocational practice is required for attending qualification courses: about 3 years for obtaining the certificate of skilled worker or junior craftsman and 6 years for senior craftsman certificate.

On termination of qualification courses the participants will sit examinations before examination boards appointed by local Chamber of Handicrafts or curatorium.

2. Vocational upgrading courses: these are intended for persons who have already acquired an occupation title in schools, in vocational courses or directly in a workshops and who wish to upgrade their qualifications. Depending on the subject, the courses last from several weeks to several months.

3. Requalification courses: these permit for requalifying from already practiced into another occupation or for mastering of an additional occupation.

4. Job adaptation courses: these are intended for preparing to simple jobs under guidance of skilled workers. The mentioned courses are limited to practical training; generally, they are very short.

5. Occupation mastering courses: these are intended for preparing the trainees to independent exercising of an occupation. The curricula include both theoretical and practical training.

6. Driving courses: all driving courses are terminated by examinations before examination boards, appointed by local (voivodship) transportation authorities.

7. Language courses: intended for preparation the participants for official language proficiency examinations.

8. Self-improvement courses: courses intended for providing the trainees with skills for their own convenience such as cutting, sawing, embroidering, photographing etc.

The financial aspect of this type of vocational training is very simple. The fees are paid in full by the participants or by their employers (both state-owned and private companies), when the latter are directing the employees to attend the courses.

4.5. Planned changes and conclusions

The new Education Act has overruled the obligation for applying to the Ministry of National Education for licenses for operating of vocational courses. Right now, the Ministry is considering the possibility of establishing a register of institutions engaged in vocational courses. Voluntary registration would be linked with awarding of categories, according to a three-grade scale. The Ministry is planning to issue a directory (periodically updated) which would include all the institutions that have applied for registration and, therefore, placed themselves under the authority of the Ministry of National Education. Executive regulations to the new Education Act are being prepared. The Ministry of National Education, in conjunction with the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, is preparing a draft on improvement of vocational qualifications and general education of adults.

Before, the relevant regulations were scattered in various documents; some of them became quite obsolete. A number of regulations, even recently carried into effect, did not function in practice. Now, however, one single document will include all major regulations related to vocational training, upgrading and general education of adults, principles for financing of the relevant activities as well as the benefits to which all persons, that improve their qualifications, are entitled.

As mentioned, the last 2 years witnessed a tremendous development of vocational courses. Despite a steadily growing unemployment there is, at the same time, a large demand for workers in specific professional groups. In large urban agglomerations, demanded are such specialists as managers, businessmen, modern secretaries-assistants, accountants, programmers-computer operators and foreign language teachers. The labor market for such occupations is practically unlimited.

This demand is connected, on the one hand, with the transformation into a market economy and with the impulsive growth of private business. On the other hand, the vocational education system has never incorporated schools for training of managers, bank workers, brokers and similar new type s of occupations. In some occupations the qualifications acquired in schools became quickly obsolete, following the collapse of the planned economy. This concerns, primarily, a very large group of economists, both among secondary school and university graduates. Also, the previous standards are presently too low for an efficient practicing of occupations; demanded are additional skills such as thorough knowledge of foreign languages both in written and spoken forms, ability to handle modern office facilities (fax, computer), driving license, etc. Required are also full availability as well as such attributes as independence,

quickness of understanding, initiative and easiness in human relations. All these factors are contributing to a rapid growth of demand for vocational courses, as they are offering possibilities for supplementing qualifications and skills in the shortest possible way. The vocational education and training system cannot keep pace with changes on the labor market (lack of schools in sought occupations, old curricula and methods, lack of staff). Despite the existence of high fees that have to be paid by the participants, some courses are very popular, as for instance the courses on business management, foreign languages, accountancy, modern secretaries etc. , which are operated by universities, foundations and private companies. Everything points to a dynamic development of non-school based courses, as a system that offers extensive opportunities for gaining of new qualifications. The existing nead for upgrading may probably be implemented solely by vocational courses.

5. Training and requalifying of unemployed

5.1. Status and structure of unemployment

Unemployment in Poland has become a permanent feature with a strong growing trend. By the end of 1991 the number of registered unemployed arrived at 2,155,573 persons which amounted to 11.4% of the working population. The growth of unemployment in the last 2 years is presented in Table 6. :

Table 6. Unemployment in Poland in 1990 and 1991

Status by		Number of unemployed	Percentage of unemployed to total active population	Percentage of unemployed to total active population (outside agriculture)
1990,	July 31	699,262	5.2%	. /16/
	December 31	1,124,753	8.3%	3.8%
1991,	July 31	1,749,867	14.1%	6.1%
	December 31	2,155,573	17.0%	9.4%

The relevant forecasts do not anticipate this pace to decrease; it is estimated that the number of unemployed will grow to 3-3. 5 million by the end of 1992.

Unemployment is a regionally differentiated phenomenon. The highest indices have been recorded in the rural regions of the north-eastern and central districts of Poland and in regions dominated by so called "obsolete" branches of industry. The highest indices of unemployment (proportion of unemployed of the active population) have been noted in the following voivodships: Suwaiki (18.6%), Olsztyn (18.2%), Koszalin (17.9%), Slupsk (17.8%), Walbrzych (17.1%) and Ciechanów (17.8%). The lowest indices have been recorded in the voivodships of Warsaw (4.7%), Poznan (6.8%), Katowice (7.7%), Kraków (8.3%) and Wroclaw (9.6%).

The structure of unemployment according to the level of education, is as follows:

primary:	30.4%
basic vocational:	33.37%
secondary vocational:	22.57%
secondary general (lyceum)	7.21%
university	2.98%

The majority of unemployed are young people; 65% are younger than 34 years of age. The structure of unemployment, according to age, is presented below:

15 through 17 years:	1.79%
18 through 24 years:	33.27%
25 through 34 years:	29.97%
35 through 44 years:	24.57%
45 through 54 years:	8.65%
55 and over	1.78%

As seen from the above indices the major group among the unemployed is represented by young people and persons with basic vocational education. Lack of possibilities for acquiring a vocation, vocational upgrading or requalification decreases considerably the chances of that group on the labor market.

5.2. Unemployment among school leavers and university graduates

By the end of 1991 the number of registered unemployed leavers from all types of schools amounted to 222,446 persons, i. e. 10.3% of the total number of unemployed. The growth of unemployment in that social group, within the last 2 years, is presented in Table 7. :

Table 7. Unemployment among school leavers and university graduates in 1990 and 1991

1990	July 31	95,239	13.6% of total unemployment
	December 31	164,254	14.6% of total unemployment
1991	July 31	203,859	11.7% of total unemployment
	December 31	222,446	10.3% of total unemployment

In 1991 the pace of growth of unemployment within the group of school leavers, relative to total number of unemployed was considerably lower than in 1990.

The highest numbers of unemployed school leavers (in absolute figures) have been registered in the voivodships of Katowice, Kielce, Lublin and Gdansk; the smallest in Chelm, Biala-Podlaska, Lomza and Leszno. In the south-eastern voivodships the percentage of unemployed leavers relative to total unemployment is higher (12-15%) than in other regions of the country.

In 1990 and 1991 the structure of unemployment among school leavers, according to level of education did not practically change, as shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Unemployment among school leavers and university graduates

	1990	1991
Basic vocational	51.4%	55.3%
Secondary vocational	30.2%	32.1%
Secondary general	13.0%	8.1%
University	5.4%	4.5%

The growing threat of unemployment among the school leavers is depicted by indices showing the proportion between the number of unemployed leavers and the total number of leavers. However these indices may only be considered as approximate, since not all leavers are entering the labor market.

The estimations of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (based on the figures from voivodship employment offices) and of the Ministry of National Education differ from each other. It may be safely assumed that 80-85% of school leavers are entering the labor market, except for secondary general school leavers. For

the latter, different sources estimate differently the numbers of leavers that are continuing their education. The Statistical Yearbook for 1991 quotes the figure of 8% for 1989/90 general secondary school leavers that did not continue their education; on the other hand, the figures supplied by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy speak of 21% of leavers registered as unemployed at the end of 1990.

For these reasons we are going to use the index which describes the proportion between the number of unemployed leavers and the total number of leavers, while considering the fact that the actual unemployment in various groups of school leavers is higher. Table 9. shows the estimated numbers of unemployed school leavers and university graduates and the relevant indices to the total number of leavers and graduates in year 1990 and 1991.

Table 9. Percentage of unemployed leavers and graduates relative to total number of leavers and graduates in 1990 and 1991

	1990		
	Leavers and graduates	Un-employed	Leavers and graduates
Basic vocational	239,300	84,368	35.26%
Secondary vocational	133,700	49,529	37.04%
Secondary general	87,000	21,451	24.66%
University	38,300	8,906	23.25%
Total	498,300	164,254	32.96%

	1991		
	Leavers and graduates	Un-employed	Leavers and graduates
Basic vocational	245,310	123,122	50.19%
Secondary vocational	127,081	71,387	56.17%
Secondary general	80,736	18,031	22.23%
University	37,140	9,906	26.67%
Total	490,2672	22,446	45.37%

It should be noted that the drop in unemployment figures does not concern the leavers of basic vocational schools, which is the largest group and most endangered by unemployment.

While maintaining due caution in interpretation of the above figures (for reasons quoted before) it seems fully justified to point out to a distinct growth of unemployment among the leavers from various schools. The indices in Table 10. show the growing pace of unemployment among various groups of leavers and graduates.

Table 10. Unemployment among leavers and graduates according to school type in 1990 and 1991

	1990	1991
Basic vocational	35.26%	50.19%
Secondary vocational	37.04%	56.17%
Secondary general	24.66%	22.23%
University	23.25%	26.67%
Total	32.96%	45.37%

The insignificant number of unemployed among the secondary general school leavers may be explained by the fact that the great majority are continuing their education - the real level of unemployment in that group is probably the highest, compared to other groups of school leavers.

The chances of employment for vocational school leavers have decreased considerably. Over 50% of that group cannot find any work. Large industrial plants, for which the vocational education system was adapted, are reducing their employment or are closing down. This concerns, above all, the metallurgical, engineering and electrotechnical branches. At the same time, the leavers of engineering and electrotechnical vocational schools are the majority in this group of school leavers and, consequently, are the most threatened by unemployment. According to figures collected by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy for the first half of 1991, over 45% of leavers in occupations such as fitters, operators, mechanics, metal cutters etc. were registered as unemployed.

A considerable threat of unemployment hangs over a relatively large group of leavers from commercial schools. There is a similar situation among the leavers from secondary vocational schools, where the most numerous groups include technicians in engineering and economics. At the same time, the chances on the

labor market for that group are very slim. Unemployment among young economic technicians attained a level of 75% while the respective index for engineering technicians equals 62%.

A specific group is represented by the leavers from agricultural schools. A high percentage of unemployed in this category may be explained by the fact that many young farmers have registered as unemployed, while working on family farms.

According to the presented figures, the university graduates are in the best situation. Most acutely threatened with unemployment are the graduates from technical universities (mechanics, building engineering, electrotechnics).

Finally, it is worth to mention that the Labor and Unemployment Act anticipates advantages for firms to employ school leavers, namely:

- exemptions from wage tax, wage growth tax and contribution for Labor Fund, determined in relation to wages paid to employed school leavers;

- reimbursement of wages paid to school leavers (up to the level of the relevant unemployment benefit), if the period of employment exceeds 12 months.

The presented situation as well as the pessimistic forecasts about the economic development seem to justify the statement that the vocational education and requalification system should play an essential part in smoothing of effects of unemployment among the young generation.

A structural reform of the vocational education system, burdened with high inertia, will undoubtedly be a long-term action. Hence the importance of non-school based training and vocational requalification.

5.3. Legal regulations

The organization of vocational and requalifying training is in the hands of regional employment offices. The latter cooperate with course providing institutions, by commissioning them to start a given vocational course or by directing the unemployed to existing courses. Requalifying courses are intended for those unemployed who are lacking qualifications, who cannot pursue their occupation any longer or when the employment office is not in a position to supply appropriate work offers. Regional employment offices are financing the courses and provide the unemployed with training allowances. The Labor and Unemployment Act offers also the possibility for directing an unemployed person onto

a course selected by himself (herself), if such a person has found a job but its undertaking is conditioned by requalification.

The training allowance is higher than the unemployment benefit. The Amendment of the Act (January 1992) standardized the latter to 36% of the average wage. The training allowance amounts to 115% of the unemployment benefit. Until recently, the level of training allowance was related to the last wage received by the employed. In the case of school leavers it amounted also to 115% of the unemployment benefit for such category of unemployed. Employment offices may also finance the training of unemployed who are not entitled to the unemployment allowance. The duration time of a course should not exceed 6 months but, in justified cases, it may be extended to 12 months.

Employment offices may also finance the training of those unemployed, who intend to start their own business.

An unemployed person, who gave-up the training for unjustified reasons, is obliged to reimburse the relevant training costs.

5.4. Financing of requalification courses

Following the Labor and Unemployment Act, the financial means for training and requalification activities are obtained from the Labor Fund. The Fund is managed by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy.

The outlays from the Labor Fund that are used for requalifying of the unemployed, are only a minor part of all the outlays for smoothing the effects of unemployment. In 1990, approximately 16 billion zlotys were spent for that purpose, which amounted to only 0.4% of the Labor Fund (the unemployment benefits amounted to 65%, loans for establishing new work places amounted to 26% and organization of intervention works 6%). In 1991, the outlays for requalification amounted to 82. 7 billion zlotys - 0.8% of the Labor Fund (the unemployment benefits approximated 82%). The plans of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy anticipated a maximum 6% of the Fund for training of the unemployed. The main causes for the small amounts spent on requalification of the unemployed were, on one hand, the passive policy of understaffed employment offices and, on the other, the shortage of financial means - in the second half of 1991 even the continuity of unemployment payments was endangered.

The questionable proportion between the requalification outlays and the unemployment allowance, as noted in the last two years, makes the Polish unemployment relief system very different from the systems existing in West-European

countries, where a major share of the funds is allotted for training and requalification.

5.5. Unemployed undergoing requalification measures

In 1990 there were 10,200 persons directed onto requalification courses (the total number of unemployed amounted to 1. 2 million by the end of 1990).

Estimated figures, related to the number of requalifying unemployed, are burdened with considerable inaccuracy because of the way they have been collected by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy. The regional employment offices, for statistical purposes, have been quoting the numbers of persons who have started and are continuing the vocational training in the given months (most likely, some of the offices have quoted only the numbers of persons that have started the training on vocational courses).

Thus, the Employment Department in the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy reported that training allowances had been paid to 8. 195 persons in the first quarter of 1991. The mentioned allowances were granted to the following number of persons in the following months:

- June: 4,754 persons
- July: 6,797 persons
- August: 4,582 persons

By the end of December there were 8,523 persons reported as drawing training allowance.

Irrespective of the difficulties in obtaining actual data, the presented figures do indicate a very small proportion of persons attending requalification courses relative to total number of unemployed. Fragmentary figures also point out, that in some regions noted for the highest unemployment, the numbers of the unemployed, directed onto the requalifying courses, is lower than the country average.

The majority of requalifying courses for the unemployed are operated by the following bodies:

- institutions permitted to provide non-school based education;
- enterprises;
- schools, research institutes, educational centers subordinated to other ministries than the Ministry of National Education.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy has at its disposal only approximate figures on the number of unemployed that are trained by various organizations. These figures, supplied by regional employment offices, are based on estimations and do not include all the requalifying unemployed (the statistics covers only 8,235 unemployed, trained in 1990 and in the first quarter of 1991). The institutions engaged in non-school based educational activities have trained 52.1% of the total number of unemployed that attended various vocational courses (in this 29.3% has been the share of Association of Vocational Trading Institutions). Courses have also been operated by professional associations such as Polish Accountants Association, Scientific Society for Organization and Management, General Technical Organization, Polish Economic Society as well as enterprises 27.7% (in this state-owned 21.0%), schools, research institutes, educational centers subordinated to ministries other than the Ministry of Education 5.0% (other organizations 15.2%).

Training of the unemployed covered over 150 occupations and skills. Participation of the unemployed in individual profiles of vocational training is presented below:

- tailoring, knitting:	22.7%
- accountancy:	10.2%
- small business:	3.1%
- welding:	7.4%
- operation of power generating facilities:	7.3%
- computer techniques:	6.5%
- construction work	5.8%
- office work:	5.1%
- welfare work:	2.9%
- car driving:	2.7%
- other:	20.3%

In some regions about 80 -90% of requalified unemployed have undertaken new jobs. The above schedule does not permit to define the qualifications most demanded by the labor market. It should be noted, for instance, that a number of persons attending the tailoring or knitting courses are not looking for jobs in the textile industry, presently in a disastrous condition, but are intending to employ these skills for their own use.

5.6. Willingness of unemployed for requalification

The low number of unemployed that are attending requalification courses results from the conditions prevailing on the labor market, legal regulations defining the

requirements for directing onto a vocational course and reluctance of persons concerned to changing of occupation or to upgrading.

Research by the Research Institute for Labor and Social Policy has shown that 12.1% of unemployed with university education, 11.3% with secondary general education, 1.2% with basic vocational education and 2.4% with primary education are willing to upgrade their skills through vocational courses. Research on unemployment in the Pozna voivodship has shown that almost 50% of the unemployed have been willing to attend courses that would give them opportunities in other occupations than formerly performed. At the same time only 12.5% have perceived real possibilities of such a requalification.

Research among unemployed leavers from various schools, registered in Warsaw (November 1990), has shown that 55.6% have declared their willingness to follow upgrading of practiced occupation, while 33.3% have been willing to learn a new occupation. A specific feature among school leavers is their lack of work experience. Irrespectively of that, the majority of leavers have not expected jobs in their particular line. Within the investigated group compliance with the acquired qualifications is an essential condition for undertaking of work for 27.3% of young people with basic vocational education, 35.4% with secondary vocational education and 50% of unemployed university graduates.

The higher the level of education, the greater attachment to own qualifications. Almost 65% of all investigated school leavers and university graduates have considered high wages as the most important issue in undertaking of work, while 56% mentioned good working conditions. Compliance with qualifications has been third. Those, who consider compliance with qualifications as important, are more willing to attend upgrading courses. The school leavers that consider compliance with qualifications as less significant have been favoring, more often, to learn a new trade.

In the opinion of the majority of employment offices the unemployed are very unwilling to enroll for requalifying courses - primarily, this concerns people at the lowest education level. This results from the fact that requalification does not guarantee a new job, but only theoretically increases the chances of the unemployed on the labor market. Very often, the unemployed reject offers of requalification, if the new qualifications do not permit for maintaining the former social position. For instance white-collar workers are reluctant to requalify for blue-worker jobs. Very often the expectations and preferences of the unemployed, as to the line of requalification, are not synonymous with the demands of labor market.

Because of the lack of clearly defined forecasts related to local labor markets, absence of programs for the revival of industry and restructurization of local economic infrastructure, the employment offices argue that they cannot operate long-term requalifying schedules. Under these circumstances, a large number of employment offices have been questioning the very necessity of training, as all the occupations demanded by the labor market have been represented among the registered unemployed.

Despite the tax reductions for employing school leavers, employers are most often looking for workers with work experience. Most effective have been the courses organized by enterprises. Industrial plants are usually limiting the training to working skills.

Another reason for unwillingness to undertake requalification efforts could be the unfavorable proportion between the unemployment benefit and training allowance.

Contrary to large and medium urban agglomerations there is a distinct shortage of vocational training organizers in small towns and villages. The problem lies in requalification of groups of persons in the same occupation, as quite often many of them cannot find work. The training institutions do not operate courses in so called free enlistment groups, while the employment offices are short of funds for individual vocational training.

The presented figures indicate a very small number of requalifying unemployed relative to their total number. Even relatively insignificant means from the Labor Found, planned for that kind of assistance to unemployed, could not be fully utilized. Additionally to generally known budgetary difficulties there are other major issues that affect the above state of affairs; two of them are briefly discussed below:

- Situation on the labor market. The diminishing number of jobs in state-owned enterprises has not been recompensed by the increase of employment in the private sector. There are no forecasts on the development of individual branches of the economy or regions that could serve as a basis for governmental programs of requalification and employment.

- Employment offices have no sufficient means, permitting for all-round activities on the labor market. A good part of information does not reach the employment offices. Inadequate market research results in following of passive policy with regard to organizing and commissioning of vocational courses.

5.7. Vocational guidance system

In Poland there are two types of institutions, engaged in vocational guidance:

5.7.1. Sections of vocational guidance in regional employment offices

The Labor Act of December 29, 1989 obliges the labor administration to provide vocational guidance. In accordance with legal regulations this is mainly intended for youth outside the school system and for adults. The relevant activities include:

- supplying of information on occupations, enterprises and vocational training courses;
- individual consultancies related to results of medical, psychological and pedagogical tests, based on principles of free choice, personal interests and competencies in particular professional requirements and existing demand on the labor market.

The instruction of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy "Detailed directives on employment and vocational guidance" has directed the main consulting activities towards:

- establishing of a data base about the labor market;
- publishing of guidebooks and directories;
- popularizing of information about the labor market - enterprises, occupations, job offers, upgrading possibilities.

In April 1981 the Employment Department investigated the organization and activities of guidance sections in employment offices. The results are presented below:

- only 109 vocational guidance sections were operating in 47 voivodships;
- among the 232 specialists employed in the mentioned sections only 153 were university graduates in the required professions i. e. psychology, sociology, economics and law; in 50 sections there was not a single psychologist;
- only 33 sections employed more than 3 persons;

- most of the sections were located in unsatisfactory accommodations, were poorly outfitted with audio-visual facilities and were short of psychological tests;

- lack of wide-spread methodology in vocational guidance. The applicable methods are more or less haphazard - there is no clear distinction between vocational guidance and simple offering of jobs.

The results of the above investigations shows, that the majority of employment offices have been unable to carry out proper vocational guidance, in order to meet the tasks defined in the respective legal regulations.

5.7.2. Vocational-educational consulting bureaus

Vocational-educational bureaus are dealing with problems of school youth. The network guidance of 49 bureaus at voivodship level and 537 at the local level. The total number of the employed specialists amounts to 5014 persons. Activities of educational and vocational consultancy are based on legal regulations established as far back as 1961.

Practically, the main purpose of these bureaus is to help those pupils that have difficulties in school and require specialist, pedagogical appraisal. Some activities are directed upon the recognition of intellectual possibilities of future leavers from primary schools and providing them with guidance in appropriate choice of secondary school.

According to educational legislation, the schools are mainly responsible for vocational consultancy. The majority of primary and secondary schools employ pedagogical specialists, but they are more concentrating on educational problems than on vocational. Specialists, whose main task is the collecting of job offers, are employed in most of the high schools. By today there is no system for educating vocational consultants.

6. Final conclusions

While finishing the present review of the VET system we would like to summarize the most essential features, especially in comparison with West-European countries:

1. A dead-end street, is practically formed by basic vocational schools. Theoretically, the leavers are given the opportunity for further education, but only 10%

are taking that chance. There are many reasons for a vast number of youth participating in that form of education; the main ones are listed below:

- The heritage of the relevant communist policy. This sector of education was strongly expanded by former authorities, while limiting the number of places in general schools (lyceum) for political and economic reasons (superindustrialization drive). A good example may be the resolution of the plenary meeting of the Polish United Workers Party of 1961, which stipulated that by the end of 1965 the number of pupils in basic vocational schools should be 4 times greater than the number of pupils in lycea. Thus the present conditions (teachers, premises) are limiting the possibilities for a rapid decrease of the share of vocational schools in the education system.

- Habitual entry to that type of schools.

- Indifference of some curators and local self-governments in transformation of schools in the provinces.

2. Inability for changing the type of school at an early stage of post-primary education, due to a vast differentiation of curricula in various types of post-primary schools, starting from the first year of education. The Ministry of National Education is trying to reform the curricula in order to have them standardized in the first year of education in all types of post-primary school, and also in the second year for secondary technical schools and lycea.

3. Central forms of financing, administrating and establishing of curricula, combined with far-going and usual unclear division of competencies among various ministries. Hence, the coordination of actions by the state administration is exceptionally inefficient and haphazard. There is even no general policy with regard to vocational education and training.

4. Unclear role of employers. The essential question is: who is the employer? As the private sector is still undeveloped, so the majority of large enterprises are still state-owned.

Links between the enterprises and schools are very weak. The old pattern of relationships, established under the communist system, is gradually put out of existence while a new one has not yet been born.

In our opinion no-one is trying to establish new relations between the local self-government, the ministry responsible for the given curriculum, curatorium and enterprises; these new relations should consider the development of private

enterprises and the new nature of local self-government. The new Education Act seems to be very "liberal", but lacks a conception for such a correlation.

5. The absence of a central institution that would coordinate research in the area of vocational education and training, as well as of labor market problems; such institution would also establish the curricula and examination standards.

6. Very poor activities of so called "private partners" and, consequently, their insignificant effect upon the functioning of the entire system. Polish vocational education and training, compared to West-European countries, is far more dependent on the state budget. It means, that the state policy is much more the essential factor.

7. Unclear role of the handicraft sector. The handicraft associations, quite influential at one time, are encountered with serious problems at present. They do not seem to have a clear and acceptable idea on the organization of vocational training and, on the other hand, they have their own interests in view. Evidently, these associations are standing aside, not participating in the reform of education.

8. Limited possibilities for vocational upgrading and requalifying outside large urban agglomerations. Very few organizations are able to provide vocational training (requalification) in small towns and villages, which makes the situation very acute for the unemployed living in those areas.

9. Lack of developed vocational guidance both for school pupils and for adults. Such guidance is presently very important, as the economic transformation very often results in a more frequent changing of jobs.

Notes

1. The figures relate to 1990; supplied by the Central Statistical Office.

2. Secondary technical schools based on curriculum for the second grade of lyceum.

3. These are schools for

- regular non-commissioned officers (Ministry of Defence)
- fire-fighting technicians (Ministry of Internal Affairs)
- regular officers and non-commissioned officers of Frontier Guard (Ministry of Internal Affairs)
- prisoners and prison guards (Ministry of Justice)
- railway men, sailors and fishermen (Ministry of Transportation and Maritime Economy)
- vocational schools operated by production plants in mining, power industry, mining and power generating machinery (Ministry of Industry); it should be stressed, that the Ministry of Industry wants to waive the responsibility for those schools and transfer it upon the Ministry of National Education - the matter will be solved in the nearest future.

4. Classification of occupations and skills (this topic is discussed in the Annex) makes the relevant ministries and authorities responsible for drawing of curricula for individual occupations and skills.

5. For example, in 1990 the cost per one pupil amounted from 920 thousand zlotys in schools within the chemical and light industries up to 2,220 thousand zlotys in schools within the mining and power generating industries.

6. The equivalent amounted to:

- in the first year of education: 9% of hourly rate times the number of worked hours, i. e. 43,916 zlotys per month;
- in the second year: 12% of hourly rate times the number of worked hours, i. e. 57,750 zlotys per month;
- in the third year: 15% of hourly rate times the number of worked hours, i. e. 126,340 zlotys per month.

7. The wages of juvenile workers amount to

- for the first year of education: 9%, i. e. 160,635 zlotys per month;
- for the second year: 12%, i. e. 214,180 zlotys per month;
- for the third year: 15%, i. e. 267,725 zlotys per month.

The above calculation has been based on the average wage in July 1991, which amounted to 1,784,838 zlotys per month; the figure has been used for calculating the monthly wages of juvenile workers.

8. The presented information has been obtained from the following sources:

a. General census of teachers EWIKAN for 1988 (EWIKAN)
b. General Statistical Office.
c. Documents worked out by the Department of Teachers Education and Upgrading and by the Department of Finance in the Ministry of National Education.

9. The Teachers Upgrading Center and its branches were closed down on January 1, 1991. The Center was responsible for educating and upgrading of teachers. On January 1, 1991 the Teachers Upgrading Central Institution (Centralny Osrodek Doskonalenia Nauczycieli) was established.

9'Prof. Jan Szczepanski - a leading Polish Sociologist.

9"Edward Gierek - General Secretary of the Polish United Worker's Party in 1970-1980.

9"' Prof. Czeslaw Kupsiewicz - renowned educationialist.

10. It is difficult to say, whether this ruling will be carried into effect because of its facultative nature. According to a former, quite similar ruling, such obligation was mandatory only in large urban agglomerations.

11. Particulars from the book by Stanislaw Kaczor "Vocational Training", although the author himself considers them as rather doubtful.

12. i. e. Ministry of National Education, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, Central Planning Office, Ministry of Health and Welfare, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Economy, Ministry of Industry.

12'. The text has been based on documents and various publications issued by the Association of Handicrafts. Because of current changes, the text has been consulted with the director of the Team of Specialists in Production, Services and Vocational Qualifications in the Association of Handicrafts.

13. Particulars from the "List of organizers licensed for proceeding with educational activities in non-school based forms" Ministry of National Education, Warsaw 1989, Annex Warsaw 1990, and from information by Mr. T. Lason from the Continuous Education Department in the Ministry of National Education.

14. Classification of courses according to "Course training base of Vocational Training Institutions", Guidebook, Publishing Office of the Association of Vocational Training Institutions, Warsaw 1989.

15. Percentage of unemployed relative to population employed in national economy (outside individual farming).

16. Percentage of unemployed relative to professional active population (index presently used according to European Standards).

Annex

Classification of occupations

There are various classifications of occupations functioning in Poland. Two of them are essential: (a) Classification of occupations and skills in the national economy and (b) Classification of occupations and skills in vocational education. Responsible for the Classification of occupations and skills in the national economy is the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy. Mandatory, at present, is still the Classification of occupations and skills in the national economy, established by the Minister of Labor on January 1, 1982. This classification is a conventional, systemized scheme of occupations and skills, existing in the national economy and mandatory, at present, in education. The classification incorporates both the occupations mastered in schools and in non-school based training as well as the occupations exercised.

The classification was mainly used for employees records, statistical reports, planning as well as vocational guidance, employment service and research work, mostly of economic nature. The classification includes 2610 occupations and skills. It incorporates 56 large groups of occupations. According to the classification, the population employed in the national economy is divided into

two categories: white-collar workers and blue-collar workers. The number of white-collar occupations amounts to 768, and of blue-collar to 1842.

Additionally, the Central Statistical Office completed a glossary of posts, for internal use. The classification of the Central Statistical Office, used for the purposes of international statistics, takes under consideration only large occupational groups, which are compatible with the occupation and skill classification in the national economy.

The existing classification of occupations and skills in the national economy is not compatible with the generally accepted Standard Classification of Occupations of the International Labor Office. For that reason the Minister of Labor and Social Policy appointed a Joint Ministerial Board (July 3, 1990) for drawing up a new classification of occupations and skills. Additionally to representatives of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and the Central Statistical Office, the Board included also representatives of the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Industry, of the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Health and Welfare, the Association of Vocational Upgrading Institutions and the Scientific Research Commission. By December 1991 the Task Force was to present a draft, containing a systemized schedule of occupations and skills, while the relevant description should be completed in 1992. Thus, the schedule of occupations and skills, as contained in the draft, would be verified at the same time.

Different are the requirements set before the classification of occupations for the demands of education. The classification of occupations and skills in vocational training is a systemized set of names of occupations and skills, incorporated in the school educational system. It defines the required curricula and schooling time; it also indicates the ministry or authority responsible for the given occupation or skill. This classification is narrower and is fully contained within the national economy classification of occupations and skills. It was in force from 1982 until today, with minor modifications. In 1986 a new classification of occupations and skills for vocational training was drawn, but it has not yet come into operation. In the planned classification, continually modified, the model of occupation has been shaped differently. The number of occupations and skills has been considerably reduced, as common purports of education for many occupations and skills have been defined.

It is proposed to use similar curricula for the 1-2 year period in basic technical schools and for the 2-3 year period in secondary technical schools; only afterwards the division into individual specializations would take place. Table 11. presents the numbers of occupations and skills, according to classifications:

Table 11. Occupations and skills according to specifications

	1982	1986	1991 (May)
white-collar	281	91	102
blue-collar	246	150	155
total	527	241	247

Responsible for each occupation and skills is the relevant Minister or Head of professional organization. At present, there are 20 such professional organizations that are heading various groups of occupations and skills. Because of organizational and legal changes some of the occupations and skills have lost their patrons (heading organizations) e. g. occupations under the responsibility of the Association of Handicrafts or Central Cooperative Association as result of legal changes, and commercial occupations after the Ministry of Industry and Trade was dissolved.

The work on classification of occupations and skills for vocational training is coordinated by the Ministry of National Education. Despite of previous assurances, the work will not be terminated within the in scheduled time. The mentioned legal and organizational changes are substantially hindering the coordinating procedures of the Ministry.

Yet another special classification of occupations has been drawn by M. Pohorski and K. Slomczynski for sociological purposes e. g. research on the socio-vocational structure of Polish society. There are 87 small, 25 medium and 10 large socio-vocational groups contained in the mentioned classification.

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